



© Patrick Allen / operaomnia.co.uk

Playing on our strengths to deliver first-class performance.

EFG is delighted to partner with Benjamin Grosvenor.

EFG Private Banking

efginternational.com

EFG International's global private banking network operates in around 40 locations worldwide, including Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, London, Madrid, Milan, Monaco, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Singapore, Miami, Bogotá and Montevideo. In the United Kingdom, EFG Private Bank Limited's principal place of business and registered office is located at Leconfield House, Curzon Street, London W1J 5JB, T + 44 20 7491 9111. EFG Private Bank Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. EFG Private Bank Limited is a member of the London Stock Exchange. Registered in England and Wales as no. 2321802. EFG Private Bank Ltd is a subsidiary of EFG International.

FREE BERLIOZ CD HIGHLIGHTS FROM WARNER CLASSICS' COMPLETE WORKS BOX-SET

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Est 1923 · FEBRUARY 2019

GRAMOPHONE

gramophone.co.uk

BERLIOZ

Music's great revolutionary

PLUS

Leila Josefowicz:
why modern music
must be championed

Christian Gerhaher's
glorious Schumann

André Previn: a major
box-set marks his 90th

Matthew Wadsworth:
the lute in today's world





HECTOR BERLIOZ

THE COMPLETE WORKS

THE FIRST-EVER COMPLETE BERLIOZ EDITION

A wealth of milestone recordings and multi-award winners together with a number of world premiere recordings

Features two of the earliest recordings ever made of Berlioz' work, plus the first ever recording of the *Symphonie Fantastique*

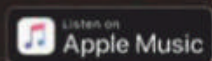


Includes a lavishly illustrated booklet containing a fascinating commentary from Berlioz biographer David Cairns

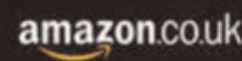
John Barbirolli • Rhené-Baton • Leonard Bernstein • André Cluytens • Colin Davis • Charles Dutoit • Laurence Equilbey • Louis Frémaux • John Eliot Gardiner
Mariss Jansons • Jean Martinon • Riccardo Muti • Kent Nagano • John Nelson • Roger Norrington • Michel Plasson • André Previn • François-Xavier Roth
Roberto Alagna • Victoria de los Angeles • Janet Baker • Marie Delna • Joyce DiDonato • José Van Dam • Sabine Devieille • Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Elsa Dreisig • Nicolai Gedda • Susan Graham • Thomas Hampson • Marie-Nicole Lemieux • Félicia Litvinne • Felicity Lott • Thomas Moser • Jessye Norman
Anne Sofie von Otter • Michael Spyres • Rolando Villazón • Marie-Claire Alain • Renaud Capuçon • Alexandre Tharaud



www.theberlioz.com



Music With Pedigree
www.thedogandtrumpet.com



GRAMOPHONE

ISOUNDS OF AMERICA

A special eight-page section focusing on recent recordings from the US and Canada

Brahms

Two Cello Sonatas. Zwei Gesänge, Op 91^a

^aAbigail Fischer *mez*

Norman Fischer *vc* Jeanne Kierman *pf*

Centaur © CRC3648 (67' • DDD)



Celebrating the approach of their 50th anniversary the Fischer Duo –

Norman Fischer and his wife Jeanne Kierman – unfold the autumnal majesty of Brahms's Second Cello Sonata with long, thrilling arcs of dramatic insight laid over a gracefully plastic structure, and implemented with rich Brahmsian sound and commanding technical wisdom. From the opening flourish, Fischer and Kierman play the F major Second Sonata with soaring, splendid virtuosity as if it were not merely a great cello sonata but a reflection of the unique relationship between Brahms and Richard Hausmann, for whom he wrote it – in his 53rd year. As the duo build momentum towards the return of the main theme in the first movement and Kierman begins to assert herself, you get a sense of how the musical balance between the two instruments must have been at the premiere, with the composer himself at the keyboard.

In the E minor First Sonata, the duo's empathy with Brahms leads them to begin with an unusually long and slow opening movement, as if they were paying homage to Josef Gänsbacher, the amateur cellist to whom it was dedicated; throughout, they reveal as many beautiful things as Brahms in E minor cares to, including an unusually courtly minuet, and surging waves of song challenging the longueurs of the obstinately fugal last movement.

The CD offers an exceptional bonus in the form of Brahms's Op 91 songs, featuring Abigail Fischer illuminating the deep emotions with her beautifully rich mezzo and Fischer *père* playing the viola part as if it were meant for the cello. **Laurence Vittes**

GRAMOPHONE *talks to ...*

Johanna Lundy

The Tucson-based horn player talks about her ambitious and varied new solo album

What inspired this programme?

I wanted to record an entire album of solo, unaccompanied music for horn, and to feature several of the 'classics' of this repertoire, plus contribute new works. Most of all, I wanted to present these excellent but lesser-known works so that audiences could get to know them. *Canyon Songs*, featuring the addition of a string trio, snuck into the project and emerged as a perfect description of the theme, and therefore the album's title.

Does playing solo Bach on the horn present particular problems?

Yes, definitely! The biggest challenge is the question of where to breathe, since the music continues without points for repose. I chose to solve this with a romantic approach. The second challenge is range. Many horn players perform the Cello Suites, which reside in the lowest register of the instrument. By performing a work for flute, the range is very high, which adds endurance challenges.



Do you have a favourite period or musical style?

I enjoy a variety of styles! In my recitals I try to include a complementary mix. The bulk of my performing life takes place in the orchestra, where my favourite composers are late Romantics like Strauss and Mahler. I also have an interest in contemporary music, where there is so much to explore.

What are your next plans?

To do more with horn and strings. The sounds are lush and warm and logistically the group is very portable (no piano needed!). My colleagues and I formed a group called the Borderlands Ensemble, dedicated to reaching audiences in small, unique venues. We are recording a disc featuring female composers.

F Couperin • Rameau

'Rediscovering Couperin & Rameau'

F Couperin *L'art de toucher le clavecin*

Rameau *Pièces de clavecin: Suites - in D; in A*

Lucas Wong *pf*

Centaur © CRC3633 (73' • DDD)



Put simply, Lucas Wong's piano interpretations of Couperin and Rameau

yield nothing to Marcelle Meyer, Alexandre Tharaud or Angela Hewitt for sensitivity and refinement. It doesn't hurt that Wong has a gorgeously responsive Fazioli

Model F308 concert grand at his beck and call, and the instrument showcases his gifts for colour, nuance and tasteful dynamic contrasts. Cogent examples include Wong's sexily shaped trills in Couperin's Fourth Prélude, the point and precision of his *détaché* articulation in Rameau's 'Le Lardon' from the D minor Suite and the way Rameau's repeated-note passages in the A minor Suite's Gavotte glide elegantly upwards.

Yet, for all of his pianistic allure, Wong's interpretations are essentially rooted in his past experiences of this repertoire via the harpsichord. His discreet use of agogics and his mastery of the kind of overlapping finger legato that



LISZT

ÉTUDES D'EXÉCUTION TRANSCENDANTE

Boris Giltburg

*“...plays with technical fluidity
and honed musicality.”*

– THE GUARDIAN



NAXOS · 8573981 · 747313398171 · AVAILABLE 1.11.19

VARIOUS

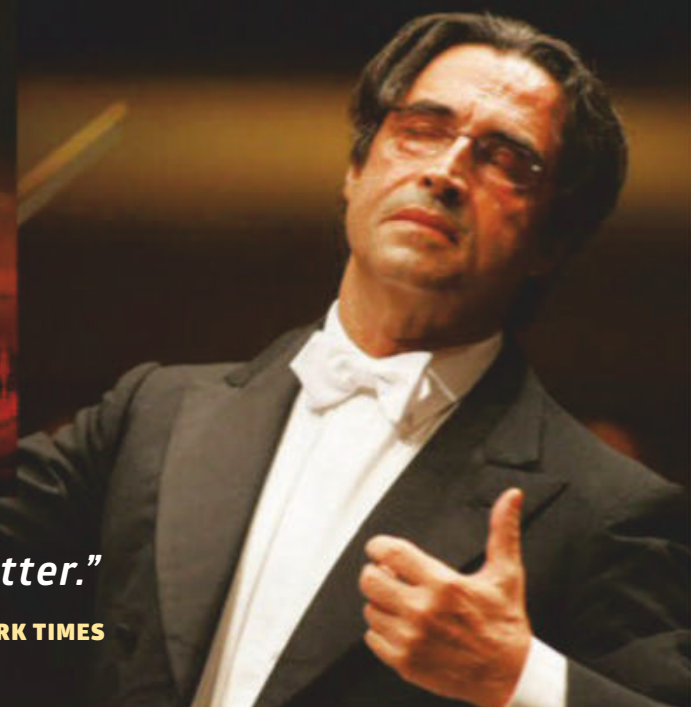
RICCARDO MUTI CONDUCTS ITALIAN MASTERWORKS

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti Riccardo Zanellato
Chicago Symphony Chorus
Chicago Children's Choir



“...Muti's gift is to clear away clutter.”

– THE NEW YORK TIMES



CSO RESOUND · CSOR9011801 · 810449010047 · AVAILABLE 1.4.19



BRITTEN COOPERMAN DOMENICONI PONCE

20TH CENTURY GUITAR

Dale Kavanagh

“Kavanagh's playing is impressive...”

– ACOUSTIC GUITAR



NAXOS · 8573443 · 747313344376 · AVAILABLE 1.11.19



Sensitivity and refinement: Lucas Wong yields nothing to the finest interpreters in Couperin and Rameau

harpsichordists use in the absence of the sustain pedal are cases in point. You notice these attributes in the Couperin B flat Prélude's soft scales and quick trills, and in the controlled freedom that Wong brings to the same composer's passacaglia-like B minor Prélude. One might imagine more propulsion at times, such as in the Rameau A minor Suite's Courante, where Meyer's vitality and rhythmic backbone prove more incisive and convincing. But Wong's attention to detail and clear commitment unquestionably come across, abetted by fine engineering. Recommended. **Jed Distler**

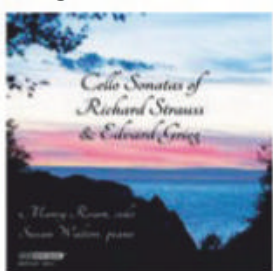
Grieg • R Strauss

Grieg Cello Sonata, Op 36

R Strauss Cello Sonata, Op 6

Marcy Rosen vc **Susan Walters** pf

Bridge © BRIDGE9512 (52' • DDD)



The sonatas performed on this captivating disc by the cellist Marcy Rosen and pianist Susan Walters came from the minds of composers most often associated with large-scale works. Even so, the intimate pieces presented here find Richard Strauss and Edvard Grieg in assured and often inspired form.

Strauss was all of 18 when he composed the Sonata in F major, Op 6. The score reveals a young man of formidable artistic gifts, however indebted the writing may be to past composers, especially Mendelssohn. Each movement evinces Strauss's ability to spin melodic material of considerable appeal and even lusciousness, while also building cogent structures. The music is by turns sweeping, poignant and impish, qualities Rosen – a cellist of grand and subtle expressivity – and Walters set forth with uncommon vibrancy.

Grieg's Sonata in A minor, Op 36, is the product of a composer already established in other genres. The piece contains several themes found in other Grieg scores that are imbued in the new contexts with fresh, folk-like allure. The first movement has hints of the composer's Piano Concerto (from 16 years earlier), while the slow movement moves with quiet eloquence and the finale kicks up its heels by way of dramatic jolts and high spirits.

As in the Strauss, Rosen and Walters bring great depth of phrasing and attack to Grieg's only work for this pairing. 'Grieg tended to disparage the cello sonata', Steven Ledbetter writes in his fine booklet notes, which makes it ever so bittersweet that he didn't attempt another. **Donald Rosenberg**

Grill

'Rustling Flights of Wings'

A Collection of Songs to Poems by CF Cilliers.

The Violin Sings in a Common Language.

Four Songs to Poems by Hart Crane. Six Songs (WB Yeats)

Nancy Allen Lundy sop

Stephen Gosling vn **Ralph Farris** pf

Innova © INNOVA019 (68' • DDD • T/t)



Art songs being among the most intimate of musical expressions, this recording of

24 such works shows Stanley Grill to be an expert craftsman who responds to his chosen texts with utmost sensitivity. And what texts they are: poems by CF Cilliers, Hart Crane, WB Yeats, Rainer Maria Rilke, Paul Verlaine, Federico García Lorca and Carl Sandburg. Such a list might appear intimidating but the words are seamlessly wed to music as set by Grill. The composer's style is accessible in the most positive sense, with melodic lines that grow from the meaning of the verses and harmonic fabrics of delicate colours and warmth.

Three of the cycles are scored for soprano and piano, while one collection is inventive on several counts: *The Violin Sings in a Common Language* is a series of

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE WORLD'S
MOST FAMOUS CLASSICAL MUSIC EVENT



NEW YEAR'S CONCERT 2019

The Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Christian Thielemann

Available to stream, download and on 2-CD set January 7, 2019

Blu-ray and DVD available March 2019



ALSO AVAILABLE



Available at Movies & Music Locations
BARNES & NOBLE
BN.COM



conversations for the eponymous instrument and a soprano called upon to negotiate poems in German, French, Spanish, English and Afrikaans (a Haiku by Cilliers, a South African poet). Nancy Allen Lundy brings luminous shadings to these challenges in tandem with the fervent artistry of the violinist Ralph Farris.

Lundy teams with the exceptional pianist Stephen Gosling in the other collections, which range from songs set to poems by Cilliers – whose imagery of ‘rustling flights of wings’ gives the disc its title – to cycles devoted to Crane and Yeats verses. The composer provides enough subtle contrasts in all of this fare to keep the ear entranced. Lundy and Gosling venture deeply into the varied atmospheres of Grill’s keenly shaped miniature dramas. **Donald Rosenberg**

‘Canyon Songs’

JS Bach Partita, BWV1013 **D Coleman** Night Storm **Decker** Canyon Songs **Krol** Laudatio **Maxwell Davies** Sea Eagle **Messiaen** Des canyons aux étoiles ... – Appel interstellaire **Salonen** Concert Étude **Vosk** Fantasy Pieces **Johanna Lundy** *hn* **Ellen Chamberlain** *vn* **Sarah Toy** *va* **Robert Chamberlain** *vc* MSR Classics © MS1684 (68’ • DDD)



At the heart of this programme is an impressively virtuoso performance, on unaccompanied horn, of Bach’s Solo Flute Partita, BWV1013. Johanna Lundy’s playing is simply breathtaking – it certainly left me breathless – whether in the elegance of the opening Allemande, the grace of the Courante and Sarabande or the bounce in the concluding Bourrée. Lundy almost convinces that the work was written for her instrument, except of course the valve horn was not invented for almost another century. The Tucson Symphony Orchestra are clearly extremely fortunate to have her as their principal hornist, a post she has held for 12 years.

Her virtuosity is apparent throughout the programme, which is unaccompanied except for the final and title-track, Pamela Decker’s *Canyon Songs* (2016 with piano, arr 2017). Another canyon song opens the disc, ‘Interstellar Call’, the solo horn sixth movement from Messiaen’s *Des canyons aux étoiles ...* (1971–74). Although Messiaen did not approve its separate performance, it started out as a solo piece before being subsumed within the larger whole. Dating from eight years later,

Maxwell Davies’s triptych *Sea Eagle* (1982) provides Lundy with a different challenge in its more lyrical tone-painting. Hers is as compelling a performance as Richard Watkins’s markedly slower (in the first two spans) account.

The pick of the other works is Esa-Pekka Salonen’s 2000 *Concert Étude*, full of beautifully fluent writing (he did start out as a horn player) and dramatic turns. Dan Coleman’s *Night Storm* (2017) and Bernhard Krol’s more conventionally inclined *Laudatio* provide fine contrast, each drawing out another facet of Lundy’s musicality. MSR Classics’ sound is nicely done, Lundy perfectly placed (not too forward, not recessed). A rather fine disc.

Guy Rickards

Maxwell Davies – comparative version:

R Watkins (5/15) (NMC) NMCD203

‘Discovering the Classical String Trio, Vol 2’

JC Bach Sonata, B37 **Bréval** Trio concertant et dialogue, Op 27 No 4 **Campioni** Sonata, Op 4 No 2 **Gossec** Trio, Op 9 No 3 **Haydn** Divertimento, HobV:15 **Klausek** Trio in B flat minor **Vivaldi** Sonata da camera a tre, Op 1 No 2 RV67 **The Vivaldi Project** MSR Classics © MS1622 (65’ • DDD)



The Vivaldi Project consists of three superb string players – Elizabeth Field, Allison Edberg Nyquist and Stephanie Vial – who are dedicated to uncovering the vast amount of neglected yet worthy repertoire for string trio dating from the Baroque and early Classical periods. Their second MSR release proves just as captivating as their first. In the opening salvo, JC Bach’s G major Trio, Field and Nyquist revel in the first movement’s conversational playfulness, while all three musicians point up the rhythmic variety and contrapuntal repartee in the central movement of Campioni’s G minor Sonata. By contrast, the Haydn Divertimento’s aria-like first movement stands out for the players’ strong characterisation of their individual parts: the violinist’s silver-toned decorative writing, the viola player’s resonant pizzicatos and the cellist’s sensitively parsed bass lines.

Also note the ensemble’s impeccably calibrated embellishments and balancing of lines in Klausek’s moody Trio, and the perfectly matched declamatory unisons at

the Bréval Trio’s outset. The latter’s *Presto* may sound more like an *allegretto* here, yet a slower tempo allows these musicians more wiggle-room for tonal shading and rhythmic precision. Indeed, their rich yet never excessive timbral ripeness fills out the disc’s concluding Vivaldi Trio to the point where a cembalo basso continuo option becomes moot. Producer and Engineer Richard Price deserves equal credit for the recording’s attractively realistic concert-hall ambience. But who provided the well-written and informative booklet notes? Highly recommended and, needless to say, I look forward to future volumes in this important series. **Jed Distler**

‘Echoes of Bach’

JS Bach Solo Cello Suites: No 1, BWV1007 – Prelude; Sarabande; No 2, BWV1008 – Allemande; No 3, BWV1009 – Courante; Nos 4 & 5, BWV1010-11 – Bourrées; No 6, BWV1012 – Sarabande **Gabrielli** Ricercar No 1 – 1st movt **Ligeti** Solo Cello Sonata **Saygun** Solo Cello Partita – 4th movt **Sollima** Citarruni **Mike Block** *vc* Bright Shiny Things © BSTC0124 (40’ • DDD)



In the same year that Berklee Press released Mike Block’s book of 28 non-classical cello études and he joined the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, the 36-year-old cellist has produced a provocative three-century recorded journey through the world of the solo cello. Consisting of single movements from the Bach Suites interleaved with music by Ligeti, Adnan Saygun, Giovanni Sollima and a relic of a *Ricercar* by Domenico Gabrielli, Block creates his own perspective on just how far the cello has come.

Still sounding fresh in their new surroundings, the Bach pieces include the Courante from Suite No 2 at lightning speed, a severely truncated Sarabande from No 6 and a mashup of the second Bourrée from No 4 with the second Gavotte from No 5, which actually works. In a touching moment for a CD titled ‘Echoes of Bach’, Block finishes the set with the Sarabande of No 1 played entirely in pizzicato – perhaps a nod from the future to the fact that there are no pizzicatos in Bach’s Suites.

What makes the experience so compelling is how naturally each track fits perfectly with the next, even though the ideas and technical requirements may be

CSO•RESOUND
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LIVE

AVAILABLE NOW!



CSO•RESOUND
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LIVE

CHICAGO
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
AND CHORUS

RICCARDO
MUTI *conducts*

*Italian
Masterworks*

VERDI • PUCCINI • MASCAGNI • BOITO



Available at The Symphony Store, cso.org,
Amazon and iTunes

This recording was made possible through the generous support of The Davee Foundation.

Global Sponsor of the CSO

Bank of America 



Wonderful memorial: Gloria Cheng, here with the late Steven Stucky, has gathered and performs a wide-ranging musical tribute to the composer

radically dissimilar. It can be momentarily disorientating, as when the pizz-rich first movement of Ligeti's Sonata follows the pizz-less Prelude to Bach's First Suite, but Block's easy, flowing technique makes each track a universe in itself, including the premiere recording of Sollima's ferocious tour de force *Citarruni*, a Silk Road commission from the Taranta Project.

The studio acoustic is a bit close up but detailed, dynamically vivid and surprisingly warm. **Laurence Vittes**

'Garlands for Steven Stucky'

Short pieces by **Julia Adolphe, Julian Anderson, Charles Bodman Rae, Chen Yi, Louis Chiappetta, Donald Crockett, Brett Dean, Fang Man, Gabriela Lena Frank, Daniel S Godfrey, John Harbison, Anders Hillborg, Pierre Jalbert, Jesse Jones, William Kraft, Hannah Lash, David S Lefkowitz, Magnus Lindberg, David Liptak, Steven Mackey, James Matheson, Colin Matthews, Harold Meltzer, Eric Nathan, Joseph Phibbs, Kay Rhie, Christopher Rouse, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Michael Small, Steven Stucky, Stephen Andrew Taylor, Andrew Waggoner and Judith Weir**

Gloria Cheng *pf* with

Peabody Southwell *mez* **Carolyn Hove** *ob*

Bridge © BRIDGE9509 (79' • DDD)



The sudden death in February 2016 of the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky came as a major shock not just to American musical life but to the wider world as well. That he was held in high esteem can be seen from the range of composer friends, colleagues and former students – 32 in all – who composed memorial piano pieces in his honour for Gloria Cheng's project. While most are Americans, the contributors range far and wide, including Colin Matthews, Julian Anderson, Judith Weir (Britain), Anders Hillborg (Sweden), Magnus Lindberg and Esa-Pekka Salonen (Finland), Chen Yi (China) and Brett Dean (Australia). The recording concludes with music by Stucky himself – *Two Holy Sonnets of Donne* for mezzo-soprano, oboe and piano, movingly rendered by Peabody Southwell and Carolyn Hove, accompanied by Cheng.

Like any such collection, the music tells one more about the contributors than their subject. The titles alone reflect their

wide range of interests and memories of the man, whether Andrew Waggoner's ... *and Maura brought me cookies*, a vignette of being plied with cookies by Stucky's daughter, or shared musical enthusiasms, particularly Debussy and Lutosławski (Charles Bodman Rae, Fang Man, Dean, Michael Small, James Matheson, Rouse, Kay Rhie, Matthews, Daniel Godfrey). Some created musical ciphers from his name (Jesse Jones, David Lefkowitz, Harbison, Bodman Rae), while others adopted a freer approach with outwardly more straightforward memorial works – though these cover many moods from anger or grief (Salonen, Stephen Andrew Taylor, Harbison, William Kraft, Eric Nathan, Phibbs, Pierre Jalbert) to affection and appreciation (Julia Adolphe, Gabriela Lena Frank, Steven Mackey, Hannah Lash, Louis Chiappetta, David Liptak) and serenity (Rouse). Donald Crockett's *Nella luce*, among others, quotes from Stucky's music.

Gloria Cheng plays these very diverse works with great affection and finesse, and Bridge's sound is excellent. A wonderful memorial to a wonderful composer who left us too soon. **Guy Rickards**

GRAMOPHONE

Choose the right
subscription for you

- THE GRAMOPHONE CLUB
 - PRINT EDITION
 - DIGITAL CLUB
 - DIGITAL EDITION
 - REVIEWS DATABASE



THE WORLD'S LEADING CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS MAGAZINE

EXPAND YOUR COLLECTION

With the world's most authoritative classical music reviews section, written by our unrivalled, international and objective panel of expert reviewers

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

We are devoted to exploring the artists stamping their mark on recording today, with captivating features and exclusive interviews

COMPOSER PROFILES

We celebrate composers both past and present, providing you with a unique perspective on the lives and work of the giants of the classical music world

SOUNDS OF AMERICA

Every issue includes a special eight-page section focusing on exciting new releases from North American artists and labels

Visit www.magsubscriptions.com/gramophone
or call **+44 (0)1722 716997**

From record sales to education: New Year news

The New Year began with some good news. Barely had the sound of Strauss waltzes faded from Vienna (this year under the baton of Christian Thielemann, reviewed on page 49) and choirs swapped their Christmas carols for Epiphany hymns (though aren't some of those among the brightest and best?), when the BPI, the UK recording industry organisation, announced its sales figures for 2018. First published was some general good news: that across all genres there was a six per cent rise in sales. But then, a week later, it announced the results of some drilling down into classical-specific results, and revealed a remarkable 10 per cent increase. Within that was a 42 per cent increase in streaming, but the standout figure for me was that CD sales alone saw a seven per cent increase.

That's quite enough statistics, and you can read more about the results in our news pages. But it did confirm something I'd begun to detect through conversations with many labels. That after a period of long-standing decline, CD sales had begun to stabilise and streaming was beginning to bring in both new revenue and, most importantly, new listeners for classical music.

All figures should come with context. Classical crossover projects account for much of those sales – but then they always have – and one positive result is too early to conclude that the tide has turned. But a streaming increase which doesn't appear to have come at the expense of physical sales is a good thing. And while we hear that a lot of classical streaming is repertoire- rather than artist-driven, that the figures



Martin

were boosted by some strong-selling and inspirational core artists – Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Yo-Yo Ma, King's College Cambridge, among them – is great too.

Meanwhile, other good news reached the many musical recipients of New Year's Honours. Most attention understandably went to the small number of the highest-profile recipients, headed by that passionate ambassador for music Nicola Benedetti. But keep reading through the list, and you'll find recognition bestowed upon a significant number of people for 'services to music education', or something similarly reflective of a life devoted to enriching the experiences and lives of children and adults alike, through teaching, or organising, or fundraising. Their names are invariably known only to those whose lives they impact upon, but are often more meaningful for that. Such people can – and I don't employ the oft-used phrase lightly – change lives.

In the autumn I reported here a worrying decline in those taking GCSE Music Exams (15 per cent down in two years). My final piece of New Year good news, then, is a welcome announcement by the UK government of a £1.33m boost to music education, plus plans to create a new model music curriculum to be devised by an independent panel of experts. Both elements are vital. Money matters, of course – but a big part of the challenge is a cultural one, about how music is valued within wider education, and society itself. Without placing too much weight of responsibility to address this vast issue on their shoulders, may I wish the panel well.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'I've loved Berlioz ever since I heard *Roméo et Juliette* as a teenager,' **TIM ASHLEY**, author of our cover story, says.

'So it's been both a pleasure and a privilege to talk with four great experts on his work, each of whom has played an essential part in shaping our understanding of the man and his music today.'



'Sometimes I worry that re-hearing Nielsen's greatest symphony won't thrill me as much as when I first

encountered it nearly 50 years ago,' admits **DAVID FANNING**, who explores recordings of Symphony No 5 in this month's Collection. 'But it always does, even though naturally not every recording hits the spot.'



'When I met Leila Josefowicz 15 years ago, she was just starting to specialise in contemporary music', says

ANDREW FARACH-COLTON, who interviews her this issue. 'I was eager to catch up with her again as she has already had a significant impact, inspiring major new works and resurrecting neglected ones.'

THE REVIEWERS Andrew Achenbach • Nalen Anthoni • Tim Ashley • Mike Ashman • Michelle Assay • Richard Bratby • Edward Breen • Liam Cagney • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Peter Dickinson • Jed Distler • Adrian Edwards • Richard Fairman • David Fallows • David Fanning • Andrew Farach-Colton • Iain Fenlon • Neil Fisher • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood • Charlotte Gardner • David Gutman • Christian Hoskins • Lindsay Kemp • Philip Kennicott • Richard Lawrence • Andrew Mellor • Ivan Moody • Bryce Morrison • Hannah Nepil • Jeremy Nicholas • Christopher Nickol • Geoffrey Norris • Richard Osborne • Stephen Plaistow • Mark Pullinger • Peter Quantrell • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Marc Rochester • Patrick Rucker • Edward Seckerson • Hugo Shirley • Pwyll ap Siôn • Harriet Smith • David Patrick Stearns • David Threasher • David Vickers • John Warrack • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts, which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is *the* magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.

CONTENTS

Volume 96 Number 1171

EDITORIAL

Phone 020 7738 5454 **Fax** 020 7733 2325
email gramophone@markallengroup.com
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER Martin Cullingford
DEPUTY EDITOR Sarah Kirkup / 020 7501 6365
REVIEWS EDITOR Tim Parry / 020 7501 6367
ONLINE CONTENT EDITOR James McCarthy / 020 7501 6366
SUB-EDITOR David Threasher / 020 7501 6370
SUB-EDITOR Marija Đurić Speare
ART DIRECTOR Dinah Lone / 020 7501 6689
PICTURE EDITOR Sunita Sharma-Gibson
AUDIO EDITOR Andrew Everard
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR Libby McPhee
THANKS TO Charlotte Gardner
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF James Jolly

ADVERTISING

Phone 020 7738 5454 **Fax** 020 7733 2325
email gramophone.ads@markallengroup.com
COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Esther Zuke / 020 7501 6368
SALES EXECUTIVE
Simon Davies / 020 7501 6373

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES

0800 137201 **(UK)** +44 (0)1722 716997 **(overseas)**
subscriptions@markallengroup.com

PUBLISHING

Phone 020 7738 5454
HEAD OF MARKETING AND DIGITAL STRATEGY Luca Da Re / 020 7501 6362
MARKETING EXECUTIVE Andrew Gilyead / 020 7501 6223
GROUP INSTITUTIONAL SALES MANAGER Jas Atwal
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Richard Hamshire / 01722 716997
PRODUCTION MANAGER Jon Redmayne
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Sally Boettcher / 01722 716997
SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER Chris Hoskins / 01722 716997
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Martin Cullingford
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Paul Geoghegan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Ben Allen
CHAIRMAN Mark Allen



A MARK ALLEN GROUP COMPANY

www.markallengroup.com

GRAMOPHONE is published by MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom.
gramophone.co.uk
email gramophone@markallengroup.com or subscriptions@markallengroup.com
ISSN 0017-310X.

The February 2019 issue of *Gramophone* is on sale from January 30; the March issue will be on sale from February 27 (both UK). Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of statements in this magazine but we cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions, or for matters arising from clerical or printers' errors, or an advertiser not completing his contract. Regarding concert listings, all information is correct at the time of going to press. Letters to the editor requiring a personal reply should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. We have made every effort to secure permission to use copyright material. Where material has been used inadvertently or we have been unable to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue.

UK subscription rate £64.
Printed in England by Southernprint.

North American edition (ISSN 0017-310X):
Gramophone, USPS 881080, is published monthly with an additional issue in September by MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is \$89. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to *Gramophone*, Worldnet Shipping Inc. (see above). Subscription records are maintained at MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, Unit A Buildings 1-5, Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford Road, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ, UK. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

© MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, 2019. All rights reserved. No part of the *Gramophone* may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the Publishing Director.

Please read our privacy policy, by visiting privacypolicy.markallengroup.com. This will explain how we process, use & safeguard your data.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the editor or *Gramophone*. Advertisements in the journal do not imply endorsement of the products or services advertised.



Reviews

EDITOR'S CHOICE

7

The 12 most highly recommended recordings reviewed in this issue

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

34

Christian Gerhaher launches a new survey of Schumann's songs with a beautiful album centred on the Op 35 *Kerner-Lieder*, accompanied with immaculate sensitivity by Gerold Huber

ORCHESTRAL

36

David Fray plays Bach; Berlioz from Les Siècles and François-Xavier Roth; Herbert Blomstedt impresses in Stenhammar; Schubert symphony round-up; Thielemann's New Year jamboree

CHAMBER

52

Peter Gregson reimagines Bach's Cello Suites; violinist Jennifer Pike invokes her Polish roots

INSTRUMENTAL

62

Pollini's latest Chopin; Joseph Moog plays Debussy and Ravel; Bavouzet's solo Schumann

VOCAL

72

Rore Madrigals; Damrau and Kaufmann join forces in Wolf; Anne Sofie von Otter's *Simple Song*

OPERA

84

A historic *Carmen*; *Così fan tutte* reconstructed; Cecilia Bartoli brings volatile drama to Vivaldi

JAZZ & WORLD MUSIC

95

Reviews from our sister titles *Jazzwise* and *Songlines*

REISSUES

96

A bumper celebration of André Previn; Russian operas from Belgrade on Decca Eloquence

BOX-SET ROUND-UP

101

REPLAY

102

The complete recordings of Feodor Chaliapin

CLASSICS RECONSIDERED

104

Two critics on Richter's famous accounts of Liszt's Piano Concertos with the LSO and Kondrashin

BOOKS

106

Roger Scruton's latest book; a fascinating collection of Pierre Boulez's lectures

GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

108

David Fanning surveys Nielsen's Fifth Symphony

REVIEWS INDEX

128



Features

FOR THE RECORD

8

All the latest classical music news, and more

BERLIOZ THE RULE-BREAKER

16

Tim Ashley anticipates the 150th anniversary of Berlioz's death in March with an in-depth feature that explores the composer's unique approach to orchestral music and opera

LEILA JOSEFOWICZ MOVES ON

24

The violinist tells Andrew Farach-Colton how she is harnessing 18 months of grief to explore new, heart-wrenching repertoire, live and on record

THE 21ST-CENTURY LUTE

30

Matthew Wadsworth is driven to make the lute (and specifically the theorbo) relevant again, starting with a new concerto from Stephen Goss

MUSICIAN AND THE SCORE

50

Peter Quantrill talks to Gianandrea Noseda about the challenges of Tchaikovsky's Fourth

ICONS

60

Jeremy Nicholas celebrates the short-lived career of Grigory Ginzburg, an outstanding pianist still overshadowed by better-known contemporaries

CONTEMPORARY COMPOSER

70

Pwyll ap Siôn explores the extreme shifts and contrasts of the music of Michel van der Aa

WHAT NEXT?

82

Mark Pullinger starts his listening journey with Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and leads us to Verdi, Wagner and Rota

PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

114

HIGH FIDELITY

117

The new entry-level in Naim's network player range; a superior DAC/headphone amplifier

NOTES, LETTERS & OBITS

124

NEW RELEASES

126

MY MUSIC

130

BBC World Affairs Editor John Simpson on the music that provides refuge in difficult times



● harmonia
mundi

Photo Paul Lewis © IGOR Studio

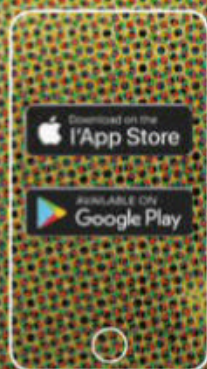
Weber Schubert **SONATAS** Paul Lewis



HMM 902324

harmoniamundi.com

If your vinyls don't fit in your living room



STREAM AND DOWNLOAD WITH qobuz

Our passion: all music.

Our obsession: high sound quality - CD & Studio.

Selections, digital booklets, exclusive articles.

▶ We are the music lovers.

qobuz.com



GRAMOPHONE *Editor's choice*

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings from this month's reviews



RECORDING OF THE MONTH



SCHUMANN 'Frage'
Christian Gerhaer
bar Gerold Huber *pf*
Sony Classical
► **HUGO SHIRLEY'S REVIEW IS ON PAGE 34**

Christian Gerhaer's gently but touchingly dramatic approach to these songs is entrancing and deeply moving throughout – a highly auspicious way to begin a Schumann series.



DUTILLEUX. LUTOSŁAWSKI
Cello Concertos
Johannes Moser *vc*
Berlin RSO / Thomas Søndergård

Pentatone
Johannes Moser offer us remarkably visceral and vivid playing in these two 20th-century cello works.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 40**



SHOSTAKOVICH. KABALEVSKY
Cello Sonatas
Steven Isserlis *vc*
Olli Mustonen *pf*
Hyperion

Stylish playing, bursting with character throughout – but then what else would one expect from cellist Steven Isserlis and pianist Olli Mustonen?

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 57**



'BLUES DIALOGUES'
String Quartets
Rachel Barton Pine *vn*
Matthew Hagle *pf*
Cedille

Violinist Rachel Barton Pine brings a compelling and completely convincing power and soul – not to mention virtuosity – to this fascinating programme.

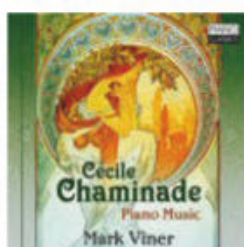
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 58**



JS BACH
Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas
Giuliano Carmignola *vn*
DG

What an extraordinary master of his instrument violinist Giuliano Carmignola is – the range of colour, of imagination, and of emotion makes this a Bach solo set to savour.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 62**



CHAMINADE Piano Works
Mark Viner *pf*
Piano Classics
The music of French composer Cécile

Chaminade, not least as performed by the excellent Mark Viner, possesses charm aplenty. Evocative of an era, it here receives warm and welcome advocacy.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 63**



'REFLECTIONS'
Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev *pf*
Decca
'As outstanding a recent debut recording

as I can recall', writes Jeremy Nicholas of Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev's album; certainly his sure and eloquent skill and touch is hugely impressive indeed.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 68**



HANDEL Serse
Sols; Il Pomo d'Oro / Maxim Emelyanychev
DG
Fresh from last year's Editor's Choice-

winning Handel album – and just as fresh-voiced – countertenor Franco Fagioli triumphantly leads the cast in a superb set of the composer's opera *Serse*.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 87**



LISZT Sardanapalo
Sols; Weimar Staatskapelle / Kirill Karabits
Audite
Rarely do musical

discoveries come as significant and intriguing as an opera by Liszt; a tantalising hint of what might have been, had he fully embraced the genre.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 88**



PURCELL King Arthur
Sols; Vox Luminis / Lionel Meunier
Alpha
2012's Recording of the Year winners

Lionel Meunier and Vox Luminis bring us highly enjoyable Purcell of, at times elegance and grace, at others a lively spirit, with joyful singing throughout.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 91**



DVD/BLU-RAY
BERG Wozzeck
Sols; Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra / Marc Albrecht
Naxos

Reviewer Peter Quantrill calls this Marc Albrecht-conducted *Wozzeck* 'among the most beautifully played and sung accounts on record and film', praising too the staging.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 84**



REISSUE/ARCHIVE
BORODIN Prince Igor
Sols; Belgrade National Opera Orch / Oskar Danon
Decca Eloquence

The pick of the operas from Belgrade brought to us this month from the ever enterprising Eloquence label.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 96**

In association with
qobuz
www.qobuz.com

Listen to many of the Editor's Choice recordings online at
qobuz.com

FOR THE RECORD

Bidding farewell to the bass-baritone Theo Adam

The German bass-baritone has died in Dresden, the city of his birth, at the age of 92.

His long career stretched over some 40 years and took him to the world's great opera houses.

Adam studied with Rudolf Dietrich in Dresden, making his stage debut there as the Hermit in Weber's *Der Freischütz* at the Semperoper in 1949. In 1952 he joined the company of the Berlin State Opera and also appeared at Bayreuth for the first time. Wagner would form a cornerstone of Adam's repertoire with the title-role of *Der fliegende Holländer* being his most-performed Wagner role.

Down the years he would perform Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), both Titirel and Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Fasolt (*Rheingold*) and Wotan (*Ring*), Hans Sachs and Veit Pagner (*Meistersinger*) as well as the Dutchman. 'Wagner makes it easy for us everywhere', Adam told *Gramophone*'s Mike Ashman in 2007, 'because of the totally natural way he sets speech; every breath ... every gesture is suggested in his note values. I don't find this so much in Italian opera.'

In 1967 he made his first appearance at Covent Garden as Wotan. In 1969, his Salzburg debut followed with Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, a role he performed on numerous occasions, and he also made his debut at the Met as Hans Sachs. Later that same year, he would again appear at the Met as Wotan in the *Ring* cycle conducted by Herbert von Karajan. He appeared at the Vienna State Opera in no fewer than 253 performances embracing 29 different roles; his last appearance there was as the Music Master in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* in 1997.

Adam created roles in modern operas, notably Berio's *Un re in ascolto* (1984), Dessau's *Einstein* (1974) and Cerha's *Baal* (1981). He was also a noted performer of the baritone part in Britten's *War Requiem* (which he recorded under Herbert Kegel).

On record, Adam can be heard in many of his best-known roles including in Beethoven's *Fidelio* as both Pizarro and



In Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Vienna State Opera in 1997

Don Fernando in recordings under Kurt Masur, Leonard Bernstein, Karl Böhm, Sir Georg Solti and Lorin Maazel; in Wagner's *Ring* under Böhm, Marek Janowski, James Levine and Bernard Haitink, in *Die Meistersinger* (Karajan), and as the Dutchman (Otto Klemperer, both in an EMI studio recording and live on Testament). Nominating the Testament set as an Editor's Choice in October 2008, James Inverne, *Gramophone*'s then-Editor, wrote: 'Among historical Wagner bass-baritones, Theo Adam usually seems to cede first place to Hans Hotter, with Adam rarely spoken of with the same veneration. Here he proves once again that at his best he was every inch the great man's equal. His Dutchman is properly tortured, noble, at times erupting in uncontrollable anger.'

On disc he can also be heard as Wozzeck (Herbert Kegel, and live under Carlos Kleiber) and as Sarastro and the Speaker in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (Sawallisch, Otmar Suitner and Sir Colin Davis). Outside the German repertoire (albeit still in German), he recorded operatic excerpts from Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (Kegel) as well as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri* (Janowski).

Adam often performed and recorded song and oratorio, and can be heard on record in Bach (his *St Matthew Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and various cantatas), Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, the Mozart Requiem (on *Gramophone*'s 1984 Choral Award-winning Philips recording under Peter Schreier) and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The latter, for Sawallisch, was reviewed favourably in these pages by Alan Blyth in February 1988: 'From his entry at the very start of the work, Theo Adam exerts his authority and presents the epitome of an Old Testament prophet, at once implacable and tortured. It is a portrait drawn superbly by Mendelssohn in Elijah's four solos, and Adam is as adept in the Handelian runs of "Is not His word?" as in the aching doubt of "It is enough".'
Born August 1, 1926; died January 10, 2019

Norwegian violinist Mari Samuelsen joins DG

The Norwegian violinist Mari Samuelsen joins the Yellow Label. Her first release, out this summer, focuses on music by so-called neo-classical composers, Max Richter, Brian Eno, Jóhann Jóhannsson and Peter Gregson alongside Bach's Chaconne.

Her first album for a Universal label was 'Nordic Noir' (Decca, 2017) alongside the Trondheim Soloists, which included music from some of the recent Nordic and Nordic-inspired TV scores like *The Killing*, *The Bridge* and *Broadchurch*.

Richter, whose music Samuelsen often performs, has praised the violinist's interpretations: 'Mari has an instinctive understanding of my compositional world', he said, 'and an uncanny ability to communicate my intentions.'



PHOTOGRAPHY: WIENER STAATSOOPER/AXEL ZEININGER

Classical music sales ride high in 2018

The BPI – the UK record industry body – has revealed that classical music, across CD and streaming, saw an extraordinary 10.2 per cent increase in sales last year. The figures, taken from the Official Charts Company data, show a 6.9 per cent increase in sales of classical CDs alone compared with 2017.

Contrary to what is being seen across the wider music market, for the classical listener, CD is proving resilient relative to online alternatives, accounting for almost 60 per cent of UK classical consumption, while streaming accounts for a quarter (across all genres, streaming now accounts for 63.6 per cent of all consumption). Overall, classical streaming saw an increase of 42 per cent year-on-year.

The combined sales of the top 30 albums totalled 645,095 (this figure includes streams – 1000 streams is counted as an album sale), though more than 200,000 of these were of Andrea Bocelli's album 'Si'. Overall, classical recordings saw album equivalent sales of 2.2m (CDs on their own sold 1.3m). The figure for 2017 was 2.02m, of which 1.25m were CD sales. While this is still lower than that of five years ago (figures for 2014 showed 2.58m album equivalent sales), the change in direction will still be very welcome news for all involved in classical recordings.



Kanneh-Mason topped the Classical chart for 14 weeks

While the term 'classical', for the purposes of industry data, covers a broad range of music from film soundtracks to crossover artists, the published data does reveal some considerable success among core artists. Cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason topped the Classical chart for 14 weeks with his Decca album 'Inspiration', centred on Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No 1 (the year's third best-selling classical album overall). Other strong sellers included '100 Years of Nine Lessons and Carols' from the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Yo-Yo Ma's new recording of Bach's Cello Suites and our 2018 Artist of the Year Rachel Podger's recording of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.

ONE TO WATCH

Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev Piano

In 2016, Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev won second prize in the Sydney International Piano Competition. Moye Chen (whose disc on DG is also reviewed in this issue) was placed third, while Andrey Gugnin (whose recording of Liszt's *Études d'exécution transcendante* will be reviewed next issue) was first. It was evidently a strong competition. Tarasevich-Nikolaev's repertoire in Sydney focused on the Russian Romantics, and this is the theme of his first disc for Decca (see the review on page 68), issued as the inaugural release in a joint partnership with Universal Music Australia. Although he made a recording of Debussy and Ravel for Acousence Classics in 2016, this new Decca disc will be many music lovers' first encounter with the 25-year-old Russian pianist.



Tarasevich-Nikolaev signed a five-record deal with Decca/Universal Australia following his success in Sydney. Regardless of the repertoire he explores on subsequent discs, we can hope for the same lyrical elegance and flair for pianistic colour he demonstrates on his first Decca recording. An impressed Jeremy Nicholas notes that Tarasevich-Nikolaev has inherited the musical genes of his grandmother – Tatiana Nikolayeva.

GRAMOPHONE Online

The magazine is just the beginning. Visit gramophone.co.uk for ...

Podcasts

Jennifer Pike (pictured) has just released a new album on Chandos called 'The Polish Violin' (see review on page 59), for which she is joined by the pianist Petr Limonov. The recording features music by Henryk Wieniawski, Karol Szymanowski, Moritz Moszkowski and Mieczysław Karłowicz. For our first *Gramophone* podcast of the year, Editor-in-Chief James Jolly met the violinist to explore the many layers of the new album and also to delve into Polish music in general.



Blogs

Don't miss the *Gramophone* blogs for revealing insights into the creative process of artists and composers. In a recent guest blog the composer Rolfe Kent describes how he approached the creation of the score for the new film biopic *Stan & Ollie*, starring Steve Coogan and John C Reilly as the legendary comedy duo Laurel and Hardy.

You'll also find a fascinating blog by composer Wim Hendericx in which he explains how he wants his music to unify groups of seemingly disparate people and so foster a spirit of mutual understanding and positive collaboration.

Facebook & Twitter

Follow us to hear about the latest classical music news and anniversaries.

HALLÉ
AT THE BRIDGEWATER HALL

HECTOR BERLIOZ

THE
DAMNATION
OF
FAUST

Sunday 10 February, 5pm
at The Bridgewater Hall

Berlioz The Damnation of Faust

Sir Mark Elder conductor
Faust David Butt Philip tenor
Marguerite Rinat Shaham mezzo-soprano
Méphistophélès Laurent Naouri bass-baritone
Brander David Soar bass

The Hallé • Hallé Choir Hallé Children's Choir
Trebles of the Hallé Youth Training Choir

'the Hallé at their dazzling best.'

Seen and Heard International on the 2017 performance of The Damnation of Faust
at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Thursday 4 April, 7.30pm

OVERTURE: LES FRANCS JUGES

Berlioz Overture: Les Francs Juges
Sibelius Violin Concerto
Debussy Nocturnes
Ravel La Valse

Sir Mark Elder conductor • Viktoria Mullova violin
Upper voices of the Hallé Youth Choir

Thursday 16 May, 7.30pm

Sunday 19 May, 7.30pm
Wednesday 22 May, 2.15pm

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

Smetana Overture: The Bartered Bride
Dvořák Violin Concerto
Berlioz Symphonie fantastique

Sir Mark Elder conductor • Simone Lamsma violin

www.halle.co.uk

0161 907 9000

ARTISTS & *their* INSTRUMENTS

Wu Wei on his customised sheng

“The sheng is the world’s oldest free-reed instrument, with a history of more than 3000 years – it is mentioned in oracle bone inscriptions belonging to the Shang dynasty as early as 1500BC. In old Chinese books, ‘sheng’ has a special meaning – ‘to give birth’ – while the script sign symbolises seeds sprouting from the ground. This resonates with my aim to open up the space, musically, for my instrument; I moved to Germany in 1995 so that I could work with living composers because, while the sheng remains part of traditional Chinese culture, it’s also important to use it to create something new.

Known in the West as the Chinese mouth organ, the sheng is played by blowing out and sucking in streams of air through the mouthpiece. This is connected to the wind chest, which was originally a bottle gourd [a vine, grown for its fruit] and then, from the Tang dynasty onwards, made of wood; today it is made of metal. The bamboo pipes are also set into the wind chest; each pipe has a rectangular slot on its inner side from which air is released, and a circular hole on its outer side that is covered by the player’s fingers. Inside each pipe is a brass blade attached to a bamboo reed; air causes the reed to vibrate, producing a sound which emanates from the pipe. The instrument’s unusual shape resembles a bird whose wings are closed, hence its nickname: ‘Phoenix Sheng’.

Originally, the sheng only had 17 pipes which meant it couldn’t play more than two octaves. In the 1980s Professor Weng Zhenfa created the perfect modern sheng, adding semitones and extending the range to three octaves. My sheng is based on his design; it has 37 pipes and allows me to play traditional Chinese songs but also contemporary music.

I didn’t start playing the sheng until I was 15. When I heard it for the first time I thought, ‘Oh wow!’ I’d never known a sound like it – it was so clear, and I just kept coming back to it. I started playing traditional Chinese music – in China, they’re only really interested in traditional music. But I believe that we have to create something of our own time. My instrument may come from China, but it belongs to everyone. In Germany, I studied improvisation and met many great composers from all over the world, such as Unsuk Chin whose sheng concerto, *Šu*, I premiered in 2009 [the DG recording on which it features was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award in 2015], and Jukka Tiensuu whose concerto I premiered in 2015.

More recently I’ve worked with the Dutch composer Joël Bons; as a member of his Atlas Ensemble, I premiered *Nomaden* [for which Bons has just won the Grawemeyer Award].

Each time I perform, I have to clean the reeds and tune them – it’s more difficult than tuning a grand piano. But I feel lucky to do what I do, using this amazing instrument. With so many problems in the world, harmony is important. Giving a concert is like holding up a mirror – I reflect the audience and they reflect me.”
‘Nomaden’, on BIS, is released in February; Wu Wei premieres Donghoon Shin’s Sheng Concerto in Birmingham on March 21 (bcmg.org.uk); he performs an ‘Artist Portrait’ concert at London’s Southbank on April 5



IN THE STUDIO

● The violinist **James Ehnes** has a busy few months ahead with three Onyx Classics recordings scheduled, all focusing on Beethoven’s violin sonatas. In March, he will record Nos 8 and 10, for release in October (alongside No 5, already in the can), and Nos 4 and 7, for later release. In April, he will take on Nos 1, 2 and 3 – again, the release date hasn’t yet been confirmed. All the sessions are taking place at Wyastone, Monmouth; the pianist is **Andrew Armstrong**.

● Also for Onyx Classics, **Vasily Petrenko** is setting down an all-Elgar album with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. In April and July, they’ll be recording *The Music Makers* and *Sea Pictures* with mezzo-soprano **Kathryn Rudge**. The release is scheduled for around November.

● In early January, soprano **Mary Bevan** and pianist **Joseph Nolan** headed to All Saints, East Finchley, to record a mixed vocal recital for Signum Classics. Featuring the music of Schubert, Haydn and Wolf, ‘Divinity, Mythology and Love’ will explore songs by those three composers and how they were inspired by these universal themes. The disc is due for release later in the year.

● At the end of last year, NMC recorded ‘Many Voices’ – a joint project with London Music Masters, featuring new works specially written for young violinists of Grades Two to Six standard. Performed by violinist **Hyeyoon Park** and pianist (and LMM ambassador) **Benjamin Grosvenor**, the composers include Colin Matthews, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Tansy Davies. The disc is due out in March.

● The **Jubilee Quartet**, who formed in 2006 at the Royal Academy of Music, have recorded their debut album. Last August, the ensemble were in Potton Hall, Suffolk, to record three Haydn string quartets for Rubicon Classics: Op 64 No 4, Op 54 No 2, and Op 20 No 2. The recording will be released in March.

● This month at Tippet Rise in Montana, three pianists – **Michael Brown**, **Adam Golka** and **Roman Rabinovich** – are producing each other’s recordings for First Hand Records. Brown is recording Ravel and Medtner, and Golka is focusing on Beethoven piano sonatas, while Rabinovich is continuing his series of Haydn piano sonatas. The results are likely to be released later in the year.

GRAMOPHONE EDITOR'S CHOICE



“A revelatory recording bringing welcome exposure to music of black composers.”

—*Chicago Tribune*

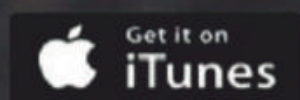
“The pieces break boundaries and some sound strikingly contemporary. All are superbly played by Pine and her accompanist, Matthew Hagle.”

—*Financial Times*

“Pine and partner Matthew Hagle are to be commended for such a thoughtful, gracious, and inspiring program, recorded in Cedille’s typical robust and clear sound.”

—*Audiophile Audition*

FOR MORE INFO VISIT
CEDILLERECORDS.ORG



NEW Release!

OUR Recordings proudly presents
the 10th release in the series of
music by late Danish composer
Axel Borup-Jørgensen



Catalogue No: 6.220672

Recent other Axel Borup-Jørgensen releases:



Borup-Jørgensen worked closely with musicians at every phase – from pre-compositional strategies to performance - among them, guitarist Frederik Munk Larsen, whose extraordinary virtuosity and attention to the most fragile nuance, draw out the deep melancholy and organic beauty of this fearsomely difficult music. There is little doubt that this new recording will become an important document of 20th Century Guitar music.

This album is Recorded in the DXD audio format (Digital eXtreme Definition), 352.8 kHz/32bit by Grammy nominated producer Preben Iwan, in the Church of the Royal Castle in Fredensborg, Denmark.

OUR Recordings

www.ourrecordings.com



Edition
Borup-Jørgensen

www.borup-jorgensen.dk

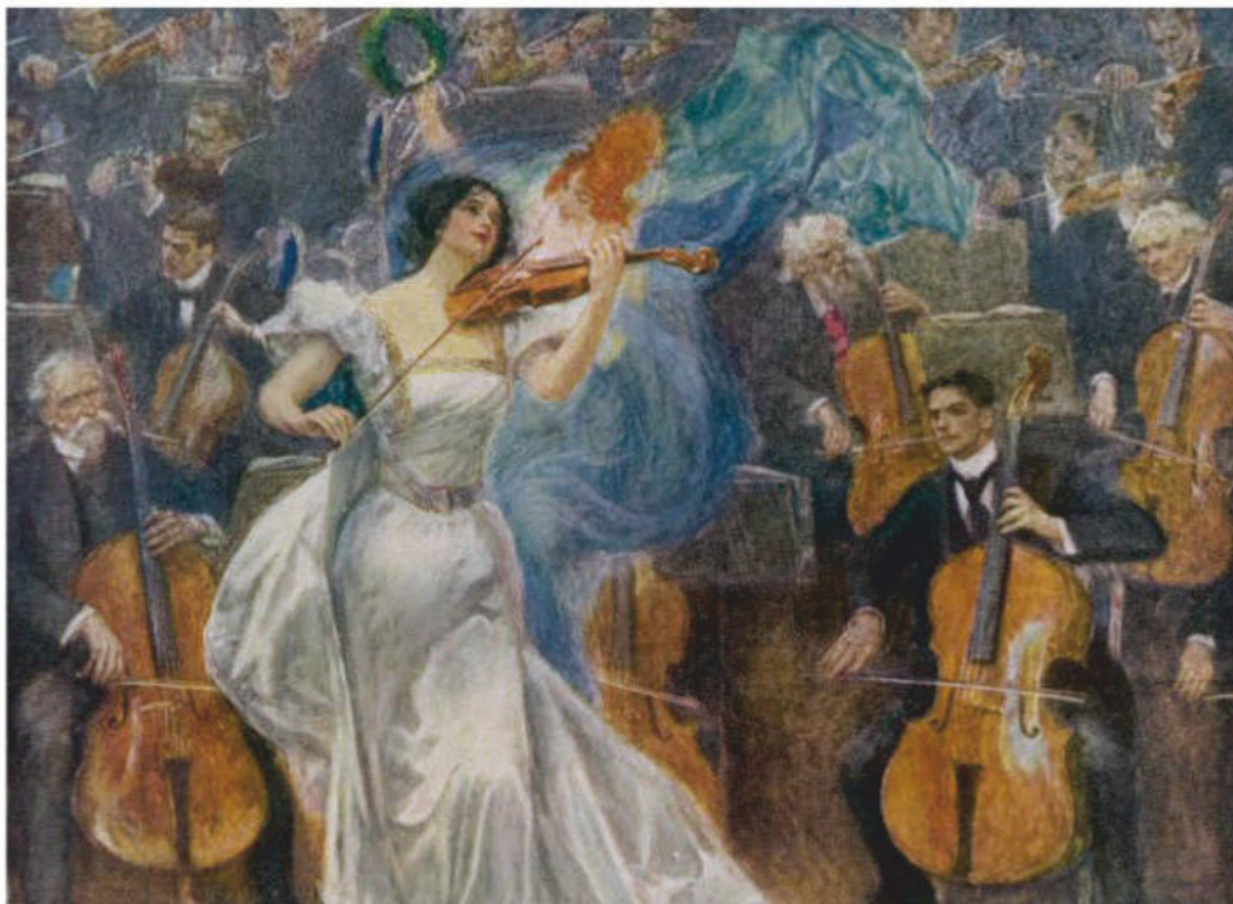
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION: www.naxos.com

UK Distribution: www.selectmusic.co.uk

GRAMOPHONE GUIDE TO ...

Concerto

Richard Bratby explores the variously collaborative and competitive form that keeps on reinventing itself



A solo violinist competes and collaborates with the orchestra in John Gulich's 'A Violin Concerto' of 1898

To work together – or to compete? If the word concerto is, as reference books seem to agree, derived from the Latin *concertare*, it's always been about these two things. In calling his Seventh Book of Madrigals *Concerto* (1619), Monteverdi almost certainly meant the former; Bach meant the latter in his *Italian Concerto* (1735) – even though the contest is enacted by a single musician (on a keyboard). By then, the idea of a concerto involving soloists in dialogue with a larger ensemble had already taken root. Corelli's Op 6 set (1714) popularised the notion of the concerto grosso – in which a small group of virtuoso soloists converses with a larger ensemble – while Vivaldi's 350-plus solo concertos (c1700–41) demonstrated to spectacular effect the musical potential when a single virtuoso performer challenges a full orchestra.

In the late 18th century, the solo concerto emerged as the dominant form: a reflection of the Enlightenment ideals of


the individual and society that Mozart could express as playful conversation piece (Flute Concerto No 1, 1778), tragic drama (Piano Concerto No 24, 1786) or lyrical character study (Clarinet Concerto, 1791). A late-century fad for the *symphonie concertante* – a concerto of symphonic proportions, with two or more soloists – only emphasised this trend.

In the 20th century, technical skill developed to such a peak that previously unthinkable concertos were now possible

After Beethoven's five piano concertos (1795–1810) the story of the genre would be dominated for a century by the question of how to reconcile solo virtuosity with the growing power of the orchestra and the dramatic scope of symphonic form. One approach was to outshine the orchestra with ever more dazzling

solo fireworks: Paganini led the way; Liszt refined it in the 1850s. Another approach was to tailor the form to match the solo instrument: Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (1844) carefully rations the use of the full orchestra. But by the time Tchaikovsky had written his First Piano Concerto (1875), what he called 'the mettlesome piano' (in a letter of 1880) could match the orchestra on its own terms; and from Brahms's First Piano Concerto (1858) through to Rachmaninov's four concertos for piano (1891–1926), the late Romantic form of the genre combined supreme virtuosity with epic musical drama. Busoni's colossal Piano Concerto (1904) is so Mahlerian that it even features a chorus.

In the 20th century, technical skill on all instruments developed to such a peak that previously unthinkable concertos were now possible. Concertos for marimba (for example by Paul Creston, 1940), tuba (Vaughan Williams, 1954) and harmonica (Villa-Lobos, 1955), and for non-Western instruments such as the sitar (Shankar, 1971), all became practical, prompting another reimagining of the form. Inter-war composers revisited the *symphonie concertante* (Szymanowski, 1932) and the concerto grosso (Bloch, 1925); Hindemith, Bartók, Shchedrin and Lutosławski applied concerto standards of virtuosity to the full orchestra in their concertos for orchestra. At the opposite extreme, Thomas Adès's *Concerto conciso* (1997) followed the example of Berg's Chamber Concerto (1925), placing virtuosity in a baroque-sized frame.

Today, many solo concertos no longer go by that name – instead focusing on the music's expressive content: James MacMillan's *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* (1992), John Adams's *Dharma at Big Sur* (2003) and Kaija Saariaho's *Notes on Light* (2006) are respectively for percussion, electric violin and cello. And yet something about a soloist in conversation – or competition – with an orchestra continues to grab audiences. The concerto predates the symphony; judging from the success of works like Magnus Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto (2002) and Mark Simpson's Cello Concerto (2018), it might well outlive it. 

► Listen to our Concerto playlist on Qobuz

ORCHESTRA *Insight ...*

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra

Our monthly series telling the story behind an orchestra

Founded 1901

Home Philharmonic Hall, Warsaw

Chief Conductor Jacek Kaspszyk (2013-present)

Founding Chief Conductor Emil Szymon Młynarski

The Warsaw Philharmonic at once embodies Poland's longstanding tradition for expatriation and its old-world resistance of globalisation. It has been exporting its wares for decades as one of the world's busiest touring and recording orchestras, yet at the time of its last visit to the BBC Proms in 2013 there were only two non-Poles among its ranks. Like its home country, it has a tradition of looking outwards and fostering inwards, for better or for worse. It has developed the flexibility expected of a modern symphony orchestra but little of the indistinct homogeneity, and can still raise eyebrows with its big, broad and often dark-tinted sound.

Like its current Chief Conductor Jacek Kaspszyk, the orchestra's founder Emil Młynarski had extensive international experience (much of it from Britain) and ensured that the likes of Rachmaninov, Prokofiev, Strauss and even Grieg would work with his ensemble. But in a turbulent century, and with Warsaw flattened during the Second World War, the orchestra's modern roots effectively date from 1955 when it moved into the new Philharmonic Hall and was given the title (in Polish) 'National'.

That proved more than a title, as the orchestra became the supreme champion of contemporary Polish music. It established the Warsaw Autumn Festival as a platform for new voices, and in 1958 Witold Rowicki began a transformative second tenure as Chief Conductor, staying for 19 years and initiating many of the touring and recording activities that would make the ensemble's international reputation. In a 1967 *Gramophone* interview, Rowicki proudly drew attention to his orchestra's awards for recording (an Edison Prize and a Grand Prix du Disque among them).



We can now add to that a not insignificant number of Editor's Choices from *Gramophone*. While many orchestras floundered during the first major rupture in the CD age – the arrival of budget labels – the Warsaw Philharmonic flourished anew under the leadership of Antoni Wit and in partnership with budget pioneer Naxos. Some 40 albums for the label included repertoire from Schumann to Janáček, with many remaining highly recommendable. As the business model has continued to shift back and forth, recent recordings have come from Warner Classics and DG too.

The mainstay, of course, has been repertoire from Poland's great 20th-century musical renaissance. The past decade and a half has given us plenty of Szymanowski, Weinberg, Lutosławski and Penderecki – scores full of the vivid colours and earthy depth that this orchestra does better than most. Its pioneering export project continues, as a healthy number of concerts per season are streamed via the orchestra's YouTube channel. **Andrew Mellor**

► Listen to our special playlist on Qobuz

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz



Education champion: Nicola Benedetti, CBE

Medici 'selects' Berlioz

'Gramophone Selects' continues on medici.tv this month with a series of videos dedicated to Berlioz. We celebrate the composer's visionary music with the opera *Béatrice et Bénédict*, the glorious song-cycle *Les nuits d'été* and two performances of the *Symphonie fantastique* (from Karajan and Jansons). Our Young Artist is Lukas Geniušas playing Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No 5, and the Masterclass sees baritone Thomas Hampson putting youngsters through their paces. Just visit medici.tv and search for 'Gramophone Selects'.

Benedetti honoured

Nicola Benedetti is among the high-profile artists named in the New Year's Honours list 2019. The violinist and champion of music education

received a CBE, as did the composer Nitin Sawhney, while Dr Shirley J Thompson, Head of Composition and Performance at Westminster University, received an OBE. Pianist Christian Blackshaw was honoured with an MBE, as were choral conductors Stephen Darlington, formerly the Music Director of Christ Church College, Oxford, and David Hill, the Musical Director of The Bach Choir who was previously conductor with the BBC Singers, at St John's College, Cambridge, and at Westminster and Winchester cathedrals.

New Artemis members

The Artemis Quartet, whose recording of Brahms's String Quartets Nos 1 and 3 was shortlisted in our 2016 Awards, has named two new members, who will join in the group's 30th anniversary year: violinist Suyoen Kim and cellist Harriet Krijgh.

FROM WHERE I SIT

A venue's quality should make no difference to a good performance, says Edward Seckerson




With last month's focus on a new generation of pianists in mind, I am prompted to think again about something that is not often discussed with regard to international concert performances: namely, not just what these exceptional young musicians explore in the way of repertoire, but *where* they explore it. The early years of forging a career puts young musicians at the mercy of venues good, bad and indifferent the world over. And that's to say nothing of the instruments they might encounter. But to some extent (and this is true of all musicians, solo and collective) they will learn over time how to carry their ideal venue with them wherever they perform – meaning that the creation of atmosphere in a performance ultimately has less to do with the venue and the acoustic per se than it does with how a performer transcends time, place and location and draws an audience into their confidence.

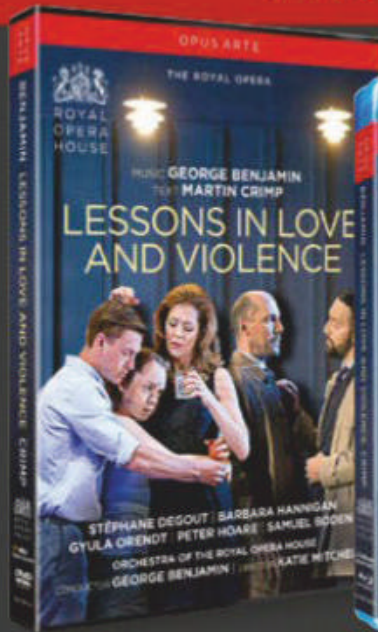
Audiences don't know how important they are. And how an audience listens, how they 'participate' in the performance through the keenness and intensity of their listening, is largely dependent upon how successfully the musician or musicians of the day command their attention and 'invite them in'.

During last year's International Piano Series at London's Southbank Centre I experienced over two very different recitals the dichotomy that can result when the capacious (and, let's face it, somewhat sterile) Royal Festival Hall plays host to a pair of exceptional talents for whom the magic respectively does and doesn't descend. From my boyhood, I always remember Sviatoslav Richter (in his rare solo recitals) insisting upon a rug and an old-fashioned standard lamp on stage in an attempt to lend some sense of living room intimacy to the gaping openness of that Festival Hall platform. Nothing so fanciful for our two soloists – one of whom shall remain nameless for obvious reasons. But when Mitsuko Uchida arrived to play Schubert, looking for all the world like some exotic bird of paradise, her bearing, her body and her face already bore the promise of the transcendental.


Uchida creates her own acoustic in and around the piano and (young players take note) there is something so confidential about the atmosphere she engenders that even the most uninviting space becomes the place you want to be. In the intermezzo of Schubert's Piano Sonata in A minor, D537, the gaucheness, charm and halting lightness of her touch was the gentlest invitation to the dance. The chill was lifted from a room too large for such intimacies, and our ears pulled focus on every shifting subtlety.

As Alfred Brendel once said, Schubert is a sleepwalker, and from modulation to modulation we traverse his dreamscapes. In the great final Sonata in B flat, D960, the wonder of Uchida lay in the breathtaking inwardness of the music's dreaming, something in which (don't ask me how) we felt entirely complicit. Songful serenity in the opening bars was offset by the 'distant thunder' of the rumbling bass tremolos, and in the great *Andante sostenuto* the crossing left hand quite literally seemed to pluck those fragile single notes out of thin air. *Where* we were listening became an irrelevancy; *how* we were listening was everything. 

OPUS ARTE



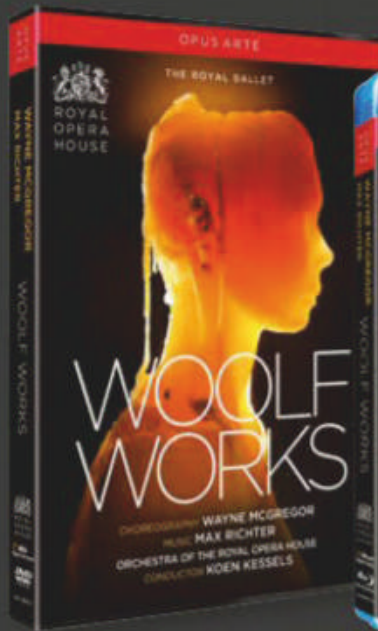
OAI221D (DVD) OABD7199D (Blu-ray)



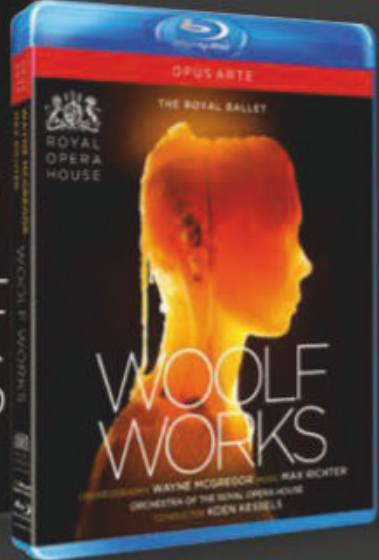
LESSONS IN LOVE AND VIOLENCE

Royal Opera House

George Benjamin and Martin Crimp's second full-length opera – following the acclaimed *Written on Skin* – explores how personal relationships can have fatal political consequences. Benjamin's richly-orchestrated score perfectly captures the drama's intense emotions, while director Katie Mitchell provides a visually stunning contemporary staging. The composer himself conducts a superb international cast.







OAI282D (DVD) OABD7247D (Blu-ray)



WOOLF WORKS

Royal Opera House

Wayne McGregor's ballet triptych *Woolf Works*, inspired by the writings of Virginia Woolf, met with outstanding critical acclaim on its premiere in 2015, and went on to win McGregor the Critics' Circle Award for Best Classical Choreography and the Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production.

opusarte.com

BERLIOZ

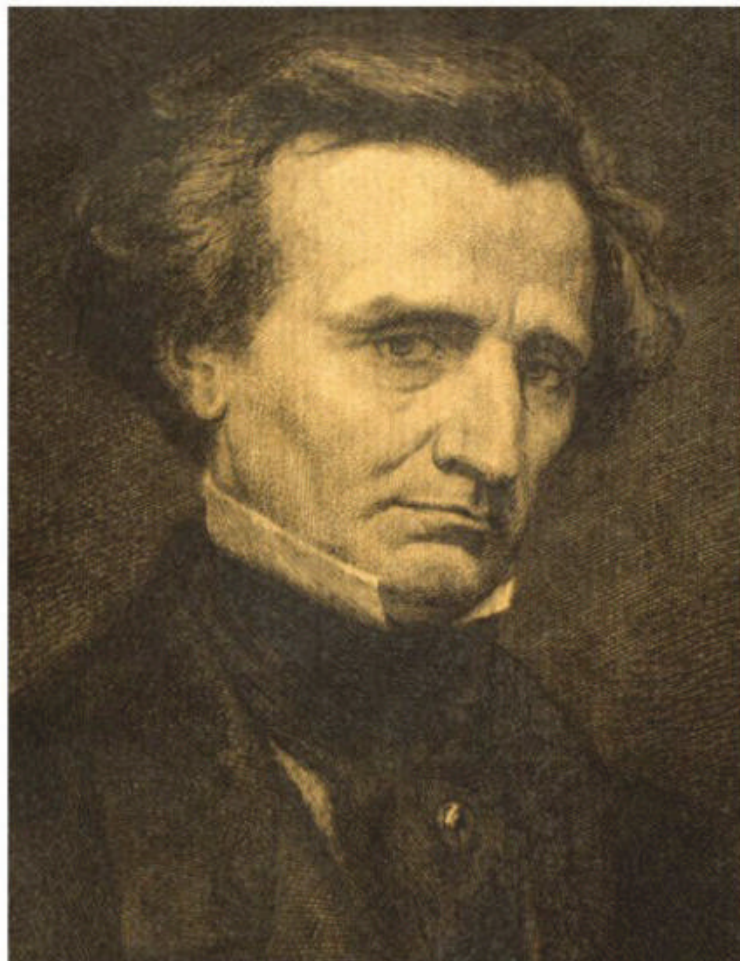
the radical

As we approach the 150th anniversary of Berlioz's death, Tim Ashley is joined by four great advocates of the composer to celebrate the self-taught, revolutionary musician whose eccentric genius is – particularly in France – only now being fully recognised

On February 7, 1848, Hector Berlioz gave a concert of his own works in London – a lengthy programme that included *Harold en Italie*, the first two parts of *La damnation de Faust*, the Offertorium from the *Grande messe des morts* and *Carnaval romain*. The response was enthusiastic, provoking Edward Holmes, critic for *The Atlas*, to write of 'the beautiful, the original and poetical effects of the music'. And he added, with astonishing insight: 'The word original is too feeble and conventional to describe the effect of these works, which are pure creations.'

In the late 1840s and early 1850s Berlioz was hugely admired in Britain, where his conducting was much praised, his use of orchestral colour evoked comparison with JMW Turner's paintings, and his music was popular with audiences, with the exception of *Benvenuto Cellini*, a failure at Covent Garden in 1853. In Germany – thanks in part to the advocacy first of Schumann, then of Liszt and later, more guardedly, of Wagner – there was comparable enthusiasm, and the progressive nature of Berlioz's work, redefining both the potential of the orchestra and the parameters of form, resulted in his identification, whether he wished it or not, with the aesthetics of 'the music of the future'. During his first visit to Russia, meanwhile, in 1847, his concerts were greeted with adulation, and when he returned 20 years later he found himself idolised by the younger generation of composers that included Tchaikovsky and The Five.

Yet in France, things were different. By the 1850s, Berlioz had effectively become an itinerant composer-conductor searching for appreciative audiences abroad, since the French



Free spirit: Berlioz, in an engraving after Courbet's 1850 portrait

musical establishment had come to regard him with suspicion and audiences were becoming indifferent after a series of initial successes. The failure of *La damnation de Faust* in 1846 opened a rift between Berlioz and the French musical world, which the success of *L'enfance du Christ* in 1854 only temporarily breached; and his spirit was effectively broken by the treatment meted out to *Les Troyens* (completed in 1858) – arguably his masterpiece and one of the greatest operas of the 19th century. Only the last three acts were performed in his lifetime, and even they were cut. Entitled *Les Troyens à Carthage*, it was by no means unsuccessful at its first performance at Paris's Théâtre Lyrique in November 1863: people were moved to tears by it, as audiences are at performances of the complete work today. But the score had, as Berlioz put it, been 'dismembered ... like the body

of a calf on a butcher's stall, with its fragments offered for sale like meat for cats'. One of the saddest ironies in musical history is that France was among the last countries to acknowledge the achievement of one of its greatest composers.

Reactions to Berlioz have long been complex. Gounod, more sympathetic than some French composers, described *Roméo et Juliette* (among others of Berlioz's works) as 'strange, passionate and convulsive music that opened up to me such new and vividly coloured horizons'. He was well aware of the work's emotional impact and the novelty of its orchestral and vocal writing, but the key word here is 'strange', an acknowledgement of Berlioz's uniqueness, perhaps, but a word that hovered over Berlioz criticism for more than a century after his death. He did things differently, led music along paths that many found puzzling.



Berlioz as a Trojan: a cartoon by Alfred Grévin published in *Le Journal amusant* on November 28, 1863, shortly after the opera's premiere in Paris



Above: Tamestit performs Harold en Italie under Gardiner, BBC Proms 2018. Below: a 2017 concert performance of Les Troyens in Strasbourg under Nelson, with Joyce DiDonato

Admiration was often tempered with charges of eccentricity, even of amateurishness.

In order to understand the nature of Berlioz's genius, the shifting responses to his music over time, and the story of the eventual rescue of *Les Troyens* from near obscurity, I talked with four great advocates of his work: his biographer David Cairns, who also generously made available to me the text of his recent Berlioz Society lecture 'Berlioz's Reputation in Britain from 1847 to the Present Day'; Hugh Macdonald, general editor of Bärenreiter's New Berlioz Edition; and two conductors – Sir John Eliot Gardiner, whose period-instrument performances have brought new light to bear on Berlioz's powers of orchestration, and John Nelson, whose recording of *Les Troyens* won the Opera category at the 2018 *Gramophone* Awards and was ultimately named Recording of the Year.

A FREE SPIRIT WHO TORE UP THE RULE BOOK

Berlioz's *Memoirs* – 'this tremendous autobiography', as Nelson describes them – were published in 1870, a year after his death. Some have questioned their veracity, though they present us with a portrait of Berlioz as he wished to be seen – witty, provocative, knowingly ironic, angry and sorrowing over his treatment in France, and grateful to those who admired him elsewhere. Reading them, however, you can't help but be struck by the way that 'he refuses to categorise himself', as Nelson puts it. He is almost invariably described by others as 'Romantic' and 'revolutionary', but he never applies either of these adjectives to himself, and is even dismissive of 'romanticists' (he mentions no names) whose loyalty to Shakespeare, so crucial to his own inspiration, he considered to have waned.



Nelson locates both Berlioz's genius and the antagonism his music provoked in an iconoclastic streak in his temper. 'If ever there was an iconoclast in the history of music, it was Berlioz,' he says. 'The French do not take to things that are too extreme, and his music was so revolutionary compared with what came before.' And the *Symphonie fantastique*, premiered in 1830 when Berlioz was still a student at the Paris Conservatoire, did indeed turn music on its head, with its placing of symphonic form at the service of semi-autobiographical narrative, its emotional volatility, morbid gothicism and still startling sonorities.

'A musical brigand like Berlioz needs his orchestra to go to the edge – the needle to be in the red zone' – Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Gardiner considers him to be 'the most outrageous radical and brigand. He's always talking about being a brigand. In *Lélio*, he says, "God! I want to leave all this bourgeois stuff behind and join a band of brigands." *Le corsaire* is all about brigandage. He'd always show up with two pistols. If you invited him to dinner, he would have the pistols on the table. So a musical brigand like Berlioz needs his orchestra to go to the edge – the needle to be in the red zone.' Berlioz, in short, was a 'free spirit' (Gardiner's words), who both rewrote and ignored the rules.

MASTER OF THE THEATRE

Berlioz's imagination was primarily fired by literature. In a famous passage near the beginning of his *Memoirs*, he recalls how as a boy he 'broke down utterly' when reading the account of Dido's death in the fourth book of the *Aeneid* ('How extraordinary is that?' Nelson comments), which marked the start of a lifelong love of Virgil that culminated in *Les Troyens* decades later. At performances of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, given by an English company at the Odéon in Paris in 1827, meanwhile, he equally famously discovered Shakespeare, later describing his experience in terms of a religious revelation

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU/BBC. GREGORY MASSAT/WARNER CLASSICS



A
AVIE

NEW RELEASES



AV 2399

FIDDLER'S BLUES

Debussy, Enescu, Ravel, Ysaÿe

Philippe Graffin violin
Claire Désert piano

Philippe Graffin's astonishing discovery of an unknown seventh solo violin sonata in Eugène Ysaÿe's Opus 27 collection receives its **world premiere recording** on this album which includes two other masterful violin sonatas – Enescu's Third and Ravel's homage to the Blues. Another world premiere is Debussy's *Claire de lune* distilled for solo violin, à la Ysaÿe.



AV 2398

SCHUMANN

Papillons, Kinderszenen

BRAHMS

Opp. 117, 118

Sarah Beth Briggs piano

Sarah Beth Briggs earned a Gramophone Critics' Choice for her pairing of concertos by Hans Gál and Mozart (AV2358), and an Editor's Choice for her Briggs Piano Trio's pairing of works by Gál and Shostakovich (AV2390). For her first solo recital recording for the label, she turns to some of the greatest Romantic miniatures ever written, largely inspired by one woman: Clara Schumann, wife of Robert and muse to Johannes Brahms.



AV 2397

BRAHMS

Late Piano Music,
Opp. 76, 79, 116-119

Charles Owen piano

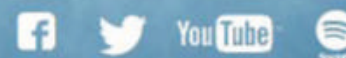
Following acclaimed recordings surveying the Nocturnes and Barcarolles by Fauré (AV2133, AV2240) and the Partitas of J.S. Bach (AV2366), Steinway ambassador, Guildhall professor and co-founder of the London Piano Festival Charles Owen turns to autumnal Brahms, revealing myriad moods with the composer harking back as well as facing forward.

proper
music distribution

Distributed in the UK by
Proper Music Distribution Ltd,
1-5 Applegarth Drive
Questor, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1JD,
020 8676 5100

A
AVIE

www.avierecords.com





Gielgud's 1957 Covent Garden production (in English) of *Les Troyens* for the first time presented the whole work in one evening – conducted by Kubelík, it astounded the critics

in which he imagines himself as Lazarus before Christ: 'I understood', he wrote, 'that I must get up from my bed and walk.'

Like many French Romantics, Berlioz equated Shakespearean drama with the dissolution of the classical forms that had both defined and hampered French culture over the preceding centuries, and in *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) he produced a work that pushes at the limits of symphonic structure by juxtaposing orchestral movements with songs, motets and, in the finale, elements of Meyerbeerian *grand opéra*. Yet the work itself, Gardiner tells me, is also rooted in the play's language. 'Ian Kemp, years ago, wrote a brilliant piece discussing how in the Love Scene Berlioz wrote the French words in to

the score. He had a few translations of Shakespeare in front of him. And in the music you can hear the exchange in the balcony scene between Romeo and Juliet, and the Nurse in the background calling Juliet; you can reconstruct the language of the Shakespearean text, if you want to.'

Form in Berlioz is largely dictated by subject and essentially self-evolving, blurring preconceived ideas of genre in the process. For Gardiner, 'Every piece of Berlioz is theatre. It's conceived in terms of theatrical space and theatrical movement,' and at last year's BBC Proms he effectively dramatised *Harold en Italie* by getting viola soloist Antoine Tamestit to wander through the auditorium and among the orchestral musicians before forming a string quartet with the three solo strings who

play in the finale. Nelson, meanwhile, is awed by the spatial, architectural structures of the *Grande messe* and *Te Deum*: 'He was the first to use space like that. I can't think of anyone else who did that in the whole history of music.'

'Each major work is a separate world that has its own colours and its own rules,' Cairns tells me. 'And I think you have to learn each of his works separately. That's one of the difficulties about him. I don't think', he adds, pointing out that *Roméo et Juliette* was a success at its 1839 premiere, 'that people in those days were so worried about form.' But as form gradually became a critical preoccupation



A concert version of *Les Troyens* in 1993 with Davis, whose 1960s Chelsea Opera Group performances Cairns fondly remembers

in the late 19th and the 20th century, Berlioz came to be seen as wayward. 'It was very easy to think', Cairns continues, 'that he wasn't in command of his métier, and hadn't been properly taught.'

MASTER OF ORCHESTRATION

Berlioz never learnt to play the piano, and wrote in his *Memoirs* of how freedom from 'the tyranny of the fingers' permitted him to 'compose freely and in silence'. 'He wrote directly into the score,' Gardiner says. 'He envisaged orchestral colours as part of the fabric of the compositional process. And he had such an acute ear, for the timbre of not just individual instruments but also their permutations. And they're magical, those permutations of colours.' Yet his compositional method was also to be held against him. 'You have to consider', Cairns tells me, 'how influential the piano and the sustaining pedal were in 19th-century music, but here was someone who didn't write like that, and that alienated some people.'

That his orchestral writing should prove so influential was largely owing to the advocacy of Liszt and the German and Russian progressives who so admired him, but no one should overlook the impact of his treatise on orchestration *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (published 1843). 'He wrote it because no one taught him how to orchestrate at the conservatoire,' Macdonald tells me. 'What we read it for now, though, isn't what people read it for in the 19th century. It was thought of then as a book of instruction. Now, of course, it's important because it tells us about the instruments of the time and what they were. As a historical document it's critical.'

'He wrote his treatise on orchestration because no one taught him how to do it at the conservatoire' – Hugh Macdonald

The book was deemed seminal, even in France. 'Saint-Saëns and his generation treated it as standard,' Macdonald continues. 'There were books by Widor and Gevaert that expanded on it. Rimsky-Korsakov went a bit further, but he didn't really rely upon Berlioz's treatise. He didn't need to.' Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky assiduously studied it. Gardiner points to its influence on Mahler, and on Verdi, 'who said some uncomplimentary things about Berlioz, not admitting the huge impact he had on his orchestral writing. There are passages in Verdi's Requiem, particularly in the *Dies irae*, which are just Berliozian – there's no question about it.' Strauss, meanwhile, prepared a German edition before beginning work on *Salome*, and later went on to say he believed Berlioz had invented the modern orchestra. He was by no means wrong.

LES TROYENS: RISING FROM THE RUINS

By the time the Second World War was over, Berlioz's reputation had reached something of a low ebb. In the years immediately following it, his music, particularly the *Symphonie fantastique*, continued to be played, but critical perspectives all too frequently focused on his apparent eccentricities and formal deficiencies. 'Those who stood up for him', Macdonald says, 'were thought to be cranks.' Understanding of his achievement was also notably incomplete owing to the absence from the repertory of *Les Troyens* in any form in which we now recognise it. Its discovery was to bring in its wake a reappraisal of Berlioz's entire output which would decisively re-establish his position, even in France.

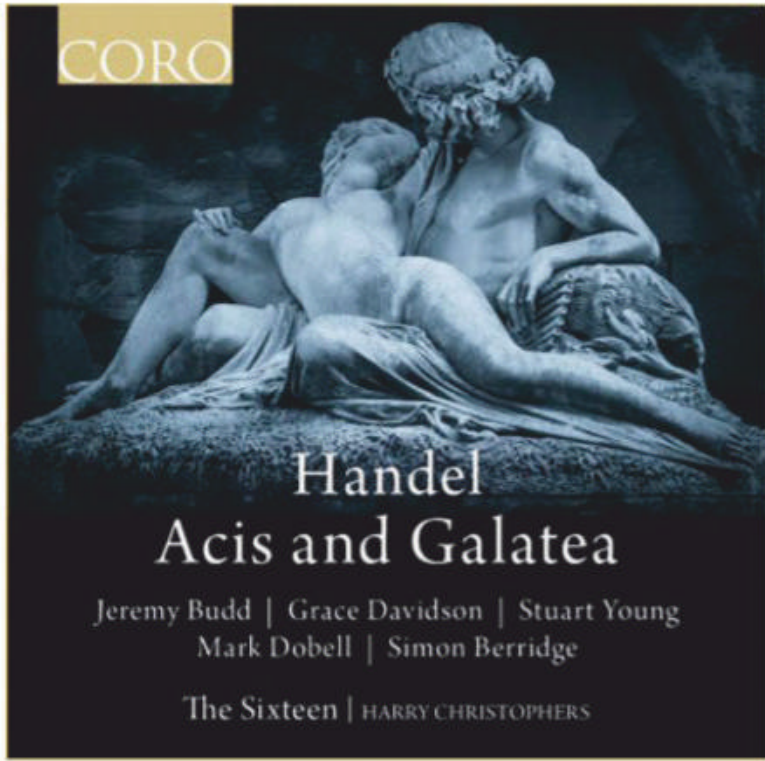
PHOTOGRAPHY: ROGER WOOD COLLECTION/ROYAL OPERA HOUSE COLLECTION/TESTAMENT. KEITH SAUNDERS/ARENAPAL

CORO

40th The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

New from The Sixteen

CORO



Handel
Acis and Galatea

Jeremy Budd | Grace Davidson | Stuart Young
Mark Dobell | Simon Berridge

The Sixteen | HARRY CHRISTOPHERS







COR16169

Famed for its interpretations of some of Handel's most loved works, The Sixteen marks the start of its 40th anniversary season by releasing its first new Handel recording in five years. Staying true to the premiere in 1718, just five singers and nine instrumentalists feature on this intimate recording.

"Forty years on, The Sixteen's supple, fastidiously nuanced soundworld continues to serve 'ancient' and 'modern' with aplomb."

BBC Music Magazine

www.thesixteen.com



Gardiner's Paris staging in 2003 was the breakthrough in France: 'We played every bloody note of it. You could feel the audience responding to it without prejudice'

The opera had by no means been entirely ignored. It was first heard complete in Karlsruhe in 1890, but for many years thereafter was performed in two parts, or indeed as two separate operas, with the first and second acts now divided into three and entitled *La prise de Troie*. It was rarely heard either complete or in a single evening. 'There was a Paris production in 1921,' Macdonald tells me, 'but enormously cut. The standard approach was that you *can* do it, but you have to cut it.'

'Les Troyens in 1969 blew to smithereens the idea that it was a dead duck – the fruit of an old, worn-out composer' – David Cairns

The first intimation of a breakthrough came in 1935, with Erik Chisholm's performance (albeit over two nights) in Glasgow using an English translation by Edward J Dent, who likened the work to 'a buried city of the ancient world waiting to be rediscovered'. The critical response was striking and prophetic. Donald Tovey – 'who had always sneered about Berlioz', Cairns tells me – was so impressed that he described it as 'one of the most gigantic and convincing masterpieces of music-drama'.

Sir Thomas Beecham's BBC broadcast of the work in 1947 was followed five years later by Hermann Scherchen's recording of *Les Troyens à Carthage* with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra; but the turning point came in 1957 – a century after the opera

was written – when the Covent Garden Opera Company presented both parts (sung in English) in a single evening in a production by Sir John Gielgud conducted by Rafael Kubelík. It changed lives. 'It introduced me to Berlioz,' Macdonald says. 'I didn't know the work before that. It was an extraordinary experience. Very few people expected it to be a success, but it had quite an astonishing effect.' Cairns recalls: 'They cut it a bit, but not much. In effect it was the complete five-act work, and its impact was terrific.' As a result, Cairns says, Berlioz became 'a kind of sacred cause, a mission'.

Another convert to the cause was Sir Colin Davis, a central figure in the Berlioz revival, and one of the composer's greatest interpreters. Cairns remembers his performances with the Chelsea Opera Group, which Cairns co-founded and with which he played percussion. 'He came every summer, and we did a whole string of Berlioz works: we did *Roméo* one year, then *Damnation*, then *La prise de Troie*, *Les Troyens à Carthage* and *Benvenuto Cellini*. It was just amazing.' Gardiner's love of Berlioz derives from the same performances, in which, as a student, he played the viola or sang in the chorus. 'It was a revelation,' he says. 'It really was.'

Two further milestones were reached in 1969. In Glasgow, Scottish Opera under Sir Alexander Gibson gave the first performances using Macdonald's critical edition; and in London, Davis conducted the Covent Garden staging that formed the basis of his epoch-making Philips recording, released a year later. It brought an entire generation of listeners to the work, and as Cairns puts it, it finally 'blew to

smithereens' the idea that it was 'a dead duck and the fruit of the old age of a worn-out composer'.

Nelson's long association with Berlioz, meanwhile, began in 1972, when he conducted the first uncut *Les Troyens* in the US, in concert at Carnegie Hall, New York. The next year he tackled it again during the run of its first staging at the Metropolitan Opera, when Kubelík, scheduled to conduct, was taken ill. 'There I was,' he tells me, 'this 31-year-old boy in the Met pit, with Christa Ludwig (as Dido) and Shirley Verrett (as Cassandra) on stage.' He went on to give more performances of the work than any other conductor in recent years.

BELATED HOMECOMING

In France, however, progress was slow. When *Les Troyens* opened the Opéra Bastille in 1990, it was performed, again cut, in what by all accounts was an ill-considered production conducted by Myung-Whun Chung. It was not until 2003, when Gardiner gave it with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique at Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, that opinion began to shift. He describes in vivid detail how he raided a private collection of period brass for the nine saxhorns specified in the score and how he 'completely succumbed to tears' when he first heard them playing from various points around the stage and auditorium. 'We played every bloody note of it,' he says, 'and you could feel the audience responding to it without prejudice. They took it to their bosom. It was a big breakthrough in 2003.'

Nelson's recording, meanwhile, has continued the process of restitution and assimilation. 'I would like to think that our recording is *the* French recording,' he says with pride.

Berlioz: The Complete Works (highlights)



The cover CD showcases the highlights of the first-ever complete Berlioz edition, a luxury 27-disc box released in February from Warner Classics of carefully selected recordings, including works completely new to the catalogue. The accompanying booklet contains a fascinating commentary from Berlioz biographer David Cairns.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Symphonie fantastique
Un bal (Valse): Allegro non troppo Orchestre National de l'ORTF / Martinon</p> <p>2 Harold en Italie Marche des pèlerins chantant la prière du soir McInnes <i>va</i> Orchestre National de France / Bernstein</p> <p>3 Roméo et Juliette Scherzo: La reine Mab, ou la fée des songes Philadelphia Orchestra / Muti</p> <p>4 La Damnation de Faust Marche hongroise Orchestre de l'Opéra de Lyon / Nagano</p> <p>5 Les Nuits d'été Villanelle Baker <i>mez</i> New Philharmonia Orchestra / Barbirolli</p> <p>6 Le dépit de la bergère Dreisig <i>sop</i> Cohen <i>pf</i> (world-premiere recording)</p> | <p>7 Grande Messe des morts Lacrymosa City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra / Frémaux</p> <p>8 Benvenuto Cellini Overture Orchestre National de France / Nelson</p> <p>9 Béatrice et Bénédict Duo nocturne McNair <i>sop</i> Robbin <i>mez</i> Orchestre de l'Opéra de Lyon / Nelson</p> <p>10&11 Les Troyens
Act 4: Pas d'esclaves nubiennes & Act 5: Air DiDonato <i>mez</i> Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg / Nelson</p> <p>12 Hymne des Marseillais Pollet <i>sop</i> Raffalli <i>ten</i> Vanaud, Le Roux <i>bars</i> Picard <i>sop</i> Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse / Plasson</p> |
|--|--|

And it is indeed the first recording of *Les Troyens* to be made in France with a French orchestra, the Strasbourg Philharmonic, and a largely Francophone cast and chorus – though, in a symbolic gesture, Nelson also deploys the chorus of the Karlsruhe Staatstheater, where the first complete performance was given more than a century before. In some respects, it marks a belated homecoming for a work that was ignored for so long in the country for which it was written. As we reach the 150th anniversary of Berlioz's death, his reputation has never been higher. Cairns describes him, quite simply, as 'such a stimulating and amazing person', and we have never been in a better position to appreciate his greatness as we are now. **G**

BERLIOZ LISTENING GUIDE

Six must-hear recordings made in the past six decades



Les nuits d'été
Régine Crespin *sop*
Suisse Romande
Orchestra /
Ernest Ansermet

Decca (3/64)

Setting texts about love and loss by Théophile Gautier, *Les nuits d'été* represents Berlioz at his most tender and intimate. Crespin's 1963 recording has long been regarded as the benchmark – an object lesson in sensual refinement and poise.



Roméo et Juliette
Catherine Robbin
mez Jean-Paul
Fouchécourt *ten*
Gilles Cachemaille

bar Monteverdi Choir; Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique / John Eliot Gardiner
Decca (3/98)

Gardiner's 1995 recording includes music from Berlioz's original 1839 score alongside the more familiar revision of 1846, in a fiercely intelligent, yet supremely beautiful period-instrument interpretation that makes you rethink the work from scratch.



Symphonie fantastique
Concertgebouw
Orchestra /
Colin Davis

Philips (3/75)

Davis was of one of the greatest of all Berlioz interpreters, and his 1974 *Symphonie fantastique* is a real roller coaster ride. Thrillingly intense, and wonderfully played, it's a reminder that the piece itself has lost none of its ability to startle and amaze.



Harold en Italie
Tabea Zimmermann
va LSO / Colin Davis
LSO Live (9/03)
Zimmermann

makes Berlioz's 'symphony with viola obbligato' her own in Davis's third and finest recording (made in 2003) of *Harold en Italie*, a superbly focused, darkly romantic interpretation that has rarely been bettered.



Te Deum
Francisco Araiza *ten*
London Symphony
Chorus; London
Philharmonic

Choir; Wooburn Singers; Boys' Choirs; European Community Youth Orchestra / Claudio Abbado
DG (7/82)

Berlioz's sacred works are spatially conceived on the most colossal scale, and the fervour, majesty and sheer enormity of the *Te Deum* are superbly captured in Abbado's 1981 recording. The choral singing is tremendous.



Les Troyens
Joyce DiDonato
mez Michael Spyres
ten Marie-Nicole
Lemieux *contr*

Strasbourg Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra / John Nelson et al
Erato (12/17)

Nelson's 2017 recording of *Les Troyens*, the first to be made in France, carries symbolic resonances of the work's belated homecoming. It's a magnificent achievement, with Joyce DiDonato and Michael Spyres both outstanding.

Wild thing

Leila Josefowicz is turning her grief of the past 18 months into a galvanising force for exploring new, gut-wrenching repertoire – not least Zimmermann's Violin Concerto, writes Andrew Farach-Colton

The last year and a half has been the hardest time in my life,' Leila Josefowicz tells me. We're sitting in the large, sparsely furnished living room of her home in a quiet, leafy suburb north of New York City. 'I lost my second marriage, I lost Charlie, and I lost Ollie.' Charles Hamlen was her first manager. She met him in 1988 when she was 10. He helped her navigate the transition from child prodigy to mature artist, and remained a close friend. Oliver Knussen came into her life more than a decade later, when she was at a crossroads in her career. She describes him as one of the most important figures in her artistic life, and as her 'confidant' and 'inspirational guide'. Looking down on us are figurines of the characters from Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, the basis for Knussen's opera (1979-83). 'My grief when he passed away on July 8 was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. I can be quite obsessive. This obsessiveness carries into learning a new work or following a new composer – it's like an infatuation, and that's what propels me to learn. So in my grief, I was going online and collecting these figures from Sendak's children's story – which is not really for children. As prodigies, Ollie and I never really experienced childhood in the way that most people do. We were pushed so hard way too young. In a way, I guess, Ollie and I were each other's wild things.'

It was with Knussen that she first discovered Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Violin Concerto, which she has recently recorded with Hannu Lintu and the Finnish RSO for Ondine. 'It was on one of my many visits to Ollie. We'd usually pick a composer: maybe Schoenberg or Dallapiccola, Boulez or Birtwistle – whoever we felt like that day. And in his house, among thousands of cobwebs, were massive stacks of what seemed like every score known to man. Collecting scores was his passion. He'd send me to one of the stacks, I'd place my hand on top and then he'd guide me: 'Move down. Keep going. Now stop there!' And I'd pull out the score. Somehow, in all the chaos, he knew where everything was. He also had an extraordinary library of recordings.'


'So that day – in 2009, I think – we chose Zimmermann. Together we listened to the Violin Concerto for the first time, as we had done with so many other works. Sharing that musical discovery was our joy. And we were both blown away. I remember we got into the second movement, with its dark, searching, sometimes frightening gestures that seem to be

right up in your face, and then when pizzicatos in the cellos started the *Dies irae*, Ollie and I just looked at each other, wide-eyed. We both had chills. It was as if someone had grabbed us by our hair and was pulling us up out of our seats. After that the music explodes, the horn section playing the *Dies irae* and the violins screaming – utter craziness. Then came the third movement, which is this hellraising rumba. Can you imagine? Here's a German composer coming out of Darmstadt writing a rumba. And this is some years before *West Side Story*, even! "Who is this guy?" we asked ourselves. And as soon as the concerto was over, we played it again, and then again the next day. We were *that* into it.'

Zimmermann became one of Josefowicz's obsessions. 'People here in the US don't know who he is. He's sort of this cult composer with a few crazy followers, like me.' I ask if she has any idea why the relatively accessible Violin Concerto (1950), arguably Zimmermann's first masterpiece, remains such a rarity. This is especially curious as it is his most challenging scores – the opera *Die Soldaten* (1958-60) and *Requiem für einen jungen Dichter* (1967-69) – that are the best known. 'There are many reasons why the concerto isn't played often enough, many of which have to do with the way that concerts are programmed these days – and that's a whole subject of its own. It matters who's conducting, and who the music director and music administrator are. What are their tastes? What are the orchestra's strengths and weaknesses? It's different everywhere you go, and often it simply boils down to the worry of how you're going to fill seats with a composer that audiences don't know.'

Josefowicz agrees that the concerto is among Zimmermann's more accessible works. 'But it shouldn't be *too* accessible,' she warns. 'It should never be an easy listen. It must be gut-wrenching every time, at least from a performer's point of view. You have to feel lost in it, somehow, like you might panic. In the final movement with that wild rumba, I hope listeners will wonder: is this fun, or is it terrifying? It's both, really, but you're never quite sure whether you're feeling fear or a kind of crazy thrill. And in the second movement – the heart of the concerto – I hope to trigger a cataclysmic emotional reaction, like when an event in your personal life makes you wonder whether you're actually going to make it. Because I think that's how Zimmermann felt so often in his own life.'

Zimmermann's story is indeed tragic. Born in 1918 to a devout Catholic family, he was drafted into the *Wehrmacht* in 1939 and served on both the Eastern and Western fronts



*'In Zimmermann's
concerto I hope to
trigger a cataclysmic
emotional reaction,
like when an event
in your life makes
you wonder whether
you're actually
going to make it'*



ERKEL

SZÍNHÁZ
THEATRE

Amilcare Ponchielli

La Gioconda

Opera in four acts, in Italian, with Hungarian and English surtitles

Librettist ► **Arrigo Boito**

Director ► **András Almási-Tóth**

Dramaturg ► **Judit Kenesey**

Choreographer ► **Dóra Barta**

Artistic consultant ► **Éva Marton**

Conductor ► **Gergely Kesselyák**

Set designer ► **Éva Szendrényi**

Costume designer ► **Bori Tóth**

Lighting designer ► **Tamás Bányai**

Chorus director ► **Gábor Csiki**

Premiere ► 22 February 2019, Erkel Theatre

Further dates ► 24 and 28 February; 3, 6 and 10 March 2019, Erkel Theatre

 **PERA**
MAGYAR ÁLLAMI OPERAHÁZ
HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA

opera.hu | facebook.com/Operahaz

before being discharged in 1942 owing to a serious skin disease. ‘His horrible skin condition was from exposure to a poisonous chemical,’ Josefowicz explains. ‘It also ruined his eyesight. If you think about his religious upbringing and his participation in the war, knowing he was on the wrong side – how does one live with that? How do you reconcile things that can’t coexist? What I hear with the *Dies irae* in the middle of the concerto’s second movement is: I am ashamed; I will be judged; I will be punished. And this is how he was feeling, year after year.’ Year after year until 1970, when he took his own life.

In her desire to get deeper into the heart of Zimmermann’s music, Josefowicz reached out to the composer’s daughter, Bettina. ‘Peter Eötvös gave me her contact information and I wrote to her a few years ago. We’ve become close friends.’ Bettina has told her what it was like growing up with her father and his debilitating depression, but also about his joys – how he loved parties, delighted in buying clothes and gifts for his wife, and was fascinated with cars and the sound of car horns. ‘Her huge book about her father for his centennial year, entitled *Con tutta forza*, has been published’, she tells me, ‘and I’m hoping and praying it gets translated into English.’ In December, Josefowicz played the concerto in Bettina’s home town of Cologne. She recently told me: ‘Bettina was at the concerts and it was so wonderful to see her.’

Josefowicz says that while the Zimmermann Violin Concerto is relatively compact – just 18 minutes on her new recording – it’s still an intense workout. Beyond its extreme emotional demands, there are enormous technical challenges. I mention trills, which seem to me to have some special significance in the work, often signalling or marking an important musical event. ‘Yes, that’s really true. A friend of mine who doesn’t know much about music heard me play it and told me he heard a lot of “fluttering”. I laughed at his cute way of describing trills. But if you think about it, what does fluttering mean? You might think of the wings of a bird or a butterfly – something light, levitated; something not grounded. And then think of what that means in Zimmermann’s music, where it’s often a kind of quivering or shaking. It’s a quiet kind of scream, in a way. Not screaming into a pillow, but what you feel before you explode – that anxiety, that fear before it turns to panic. I remember when I first started studying this work and saw that I have to trill for what seems like thousands of bars in the second movement, I thought: well, my arm is going to fall off. Off the top of my head, I can’t think of another piece where I have to trill for so long. We’re taught that you’re supposed to remain relaxed when you trill, but how am I supposed to stay relaxed for that length of time? It’s just not possible. So when I’m playing it, I physically *feel* the music’s discomfort.’



‘I guess we were each other’s wild things’: Josefowicz on stage in Tokyo in 2015 with her friend and mentor Oliver Knussen

‘The sessions were exhausting – it’s as if you have to take a knife and slit to get these emotions out and into the microphones’

She’s been going through the final edits of the new recording and says she’s pleased and excited with the result. ‘They were the most exhausting recording sessions – fabulous, but exhausting. I could barely walk back to the hotel after them because it’s as if you have to take a knife and slit to get these emotions out and into the microphones.’ She’s also grateful to have had Lintu as her collaborator on this project that’s so close to her heart. ‘Hannu is a dear friend and one of the conductors I feel safe with on stage. Not only that, but he’s game to do all these great new works with me. I can say, “Hannu, we *need* to do this,” and I know that he’ll consider it seriously and try to

make it work. I pushed hard when we were recording the Zimmermann, because I know the piece so well and knew he’d be right there with me the whole time.’

If you’ve seen Josefowicz play in concert, you’ll likely have noticed her highly animated performance style. She’s like that in conversation, too, her speech audibly marked with italics and bold emphases, and occasionally her excitement suggests all capitals. Speaking of Zimmermann’s concerto, for example, she suddenly bursts out: ‘Did you know that he wrote a Violin Sonata, too?! And that it came first? It’s the same music as the concerto – well, the outer movements are identical and the middle movement is condensed.’ She tells me that her current recital programme with pianist John Novacek ends with the sonata. When I first met her in Manhattan in around 2003 through Hamlen, who was a mutual friend, she invited me to hear her play with Novacek at a friend’s apartment. She was preparing for her first performances of Knussen’s Violin Concerto and wanted to try it out in front of a small, invited audience. I recall being astonished by the ferocity of her playing as well as by Novacek’s musicianship, as he was reading at full tilt from the orchestral score. ‘I remember that night, too. I was in massive prep mode,’ she recalls. ‘And, yes! John is amazing. He’s such a gem. I will always be playing with him. *Always*. Did you know I met him when I was eight? I’m now 41. That’s how long we’ve been playing together.’

For almost 20 years now Josefowicz has placed her focus exclusively on repertoire from the 20th and 21st centuries. She says that at some point in her late teens and early twenties she came to the realisation that running around the world playing the standard repertoire was not for her. Getting to know Knussen and John Adams helped in her search to find her own path. 'I didn't really know John until he came to hear me play his Violin Concerto in Seattle in 2001. We'd met once or twice before, but within a month of hearing me in those performances he'd lined up concerts in four or five major cities with him conducting and me playing. That was the start of everything. He was really starting to come up in the musical world, and Ollie was already in his prime. It was this incredible train that I jumped on just as it was moving out of the station.'

These days, musical opportunities come Josefowicz's way at an increasingly hectic pace. 'There's so much I'm *not* doing, of course, because I only have so much time and energy. I have to choose, and I end up choosing for very specific reasons. Sometimes it's a composer I love. Take Tom Adès, whose *Concentric Paths* I play quite a lot. That piece had been around for a few years before I fell completely in love with it. There was no printed score at the time, just the manuscript, so I learnt it from the full orchestral score, which was totally crazy. But I did it because I *had* to. I love it that much. Sometimes a work hits you between the eyes like that. Also, certain languages suit my physicality more than others. I can love and respect a composer or a piece and know that they're not really suited to my playing aesthetic. I choose things that feel tailored to me, because I know my own strengths and weaknesses – and we all have them, right? – so it's just a question of what fits. It's like a relationship. It's what fits.'

Josefowicz is somewhat loath to talk about newer projects. She has given some major interviews after winning the \$100,000 Avery Fisher Prize in October and says she's been in trouble for 'spilling the beans' about a few commissions that weren't fully contracted at the time. 'But I specialise in new music,' she says in exasperation. 'Isn't that what I'm *supposed* to talk about?! What I *can* tell you is that I'm playing two British composers who I really believe in. There's Colin Matthews's Violin Concerto, which I premiered with Ollie in 2009. I'll be bringing that back in the autumn of 2019 with

Sir Simon Rattle and the LSO. I'll also play it in April under Daníel Bjarnason, who I heard about through John Adams. Daníel wrote a Violin Concerto for Pekka Kuusisto, so he's a composer-conductor – that rarest of species. A person that can actually do both really well is extremely rare; in fact, rare probably isn't even the word – they're practically extinct. Whenever I meet a fantastic composer, I tell them: "Learn to conduct! Do it! Now! And take it seriously." Then I'm also doing the UK premiere of Helen Grime's Violin Concerto on a recommendation from Ollie. He really respected her and conducted a lot of her music




With Hannu Lintu at the Helsinki Music Centre, May 24, 2018, during the Zimmermann recording sessions with the Finnish RSO

'Ollie used to say: you need grit to produce a pearl. My children are my pearls. When I'm feeling horrible, they're always there'

over the years, so it now seems especially appropriate that I'm playing her concerto.'

Josefowicz has three boys, aged four, six, and eighteen. It's nearly time for her to collect the younger two from the school bus. I ask her if she's comfortable talking about balancing her career with her family life. 'Oh, yes. It's an

important thing to talk about. Look, I've had two marriages. They're over, and I'm still dealing with different kinds of pain from that. But Ollie always used to say: you need grit to produce a pearl.

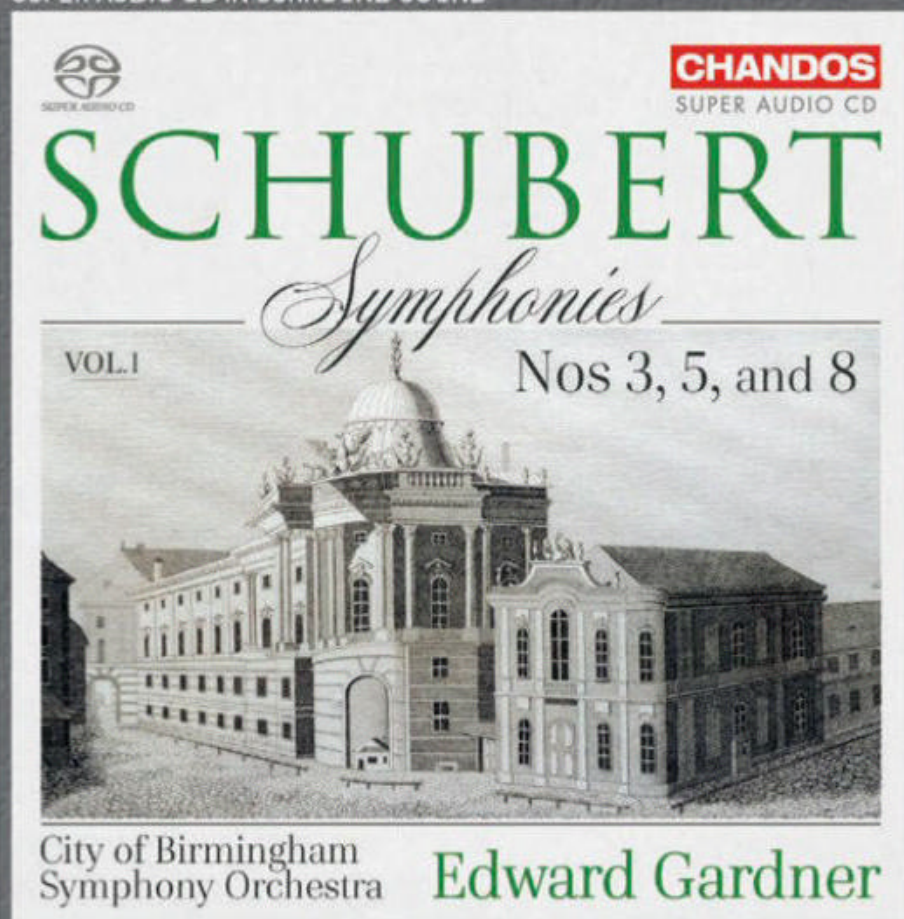
These children are my pearls. If I'm feeling horrible, whether from grief, or when my marriage was falling apart, or from losing a friend, or when I'm just feeling lonely on the road – they're always there. When they come home from school, I spend as much time as I can with them; and when I'm away, I'm always picking up the iPhone to FaceTime them. They give me more joy than I ever could have imagined. They're my rocks, and – along with music – my foundation.' 

► Read *Gramophone's* review of the Zimmermann concerto disc on page 46

CHANDOS
THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

FEBRUARY RELEASES

SUPER AUDIO CD IN SURROUND SOUND



Disc of the Month

SCHUBERT

SYMPHONIES, VOL. 1

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Edward Gardner

Following its highly successful series 'Mendelssohn in Birmingham', the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra with its former Principal Guest Conductor Edward Gardner presents the first volume of a complete Schubert Symphony cycle. Recorded following acclaimed performances in July 2018.

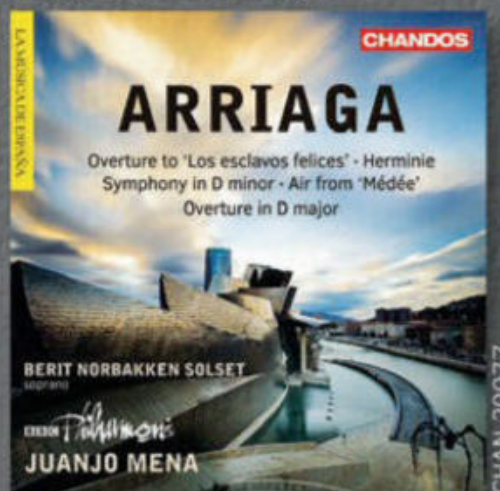
CHSA 5234



CLARA SCHUMANN DAME ETHEL SMYTH AMY BEACH

Tasmin Little | John Lenehan

The renowned violinist Tasmin Little returns with fascinating and varied programme from three women composers. She plays this music, so close to her heart, with her usual warmth and dexterity.



ARRIAGA HERMINIE, SYMPHONY IN D MINOR

Berit Norbakken Solset
BBC Philharmonic | Juanjo Mena

The Spanish music specialist Juanjo Mena continues the series 'La Música de España' with works by Juan Crisóstomo de Arriaga, known for years after his early death as the 'Spanish Mozart'.



BAVOUZET PLAYS SCHUMANN

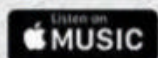
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's programme is built around the *Grande Sonate* (No. 3). Jean-Efflam first discovered the work through a recording by Vladimir Horowitz in the 1980s, and got to play the work to, and discuss it with, Horowitz in Paris in 1985.



BACH KEYBOARD WORKS Federico Colli

For his second album on Chandos, Federico Colli explores the relationship between Bach's music for keyboard and what Colli regards as its transcendent quality, its universal beauty.

WWW.CHANDOS.NET
[MP3 • LOSSLESS • STUDIO • SURROUND]
[SACD • CD • USB]



PRESTO
CLASSICAL

EUROPADISC



STAY IN THE KNOW
Twitter Facebook Instagram YouTube

The 21st-century lute

Whether he's commissioning the first ever concerto for theorbo or exploring methods of amplification, **Matthew Wadsworth** is determined to make the lute an instrument for our time, finds **Martin Cullingford**

Ever since its origins sometime in the 16th century, its unique shape has remained pretty much untouched – a piece of half-millennial old musical craftsmanship, integral to today's musical life, mastered by leading virtuosos in their thousands (and played by millions more), inspiring the world's greatest composers to heights of creativity with its extraordinary sound world ... I refer to the violin. But why can this be said of the ubiquitous fiddle and not the theorbo, or even its more recognisable and even older family member, the lute? Of course there are differences – in the case of the theorbo, its role was mainly in accompaniment, and as for portability ... But such are the vagaries of fate. Matthew Wadsworth, however, one of today's leading lute virtuosos, is having none of it. 'When people, who are less acquainted with the lute, think of it', he says, 'they might think of Elizabethan music, or Shakespeare, and indeed there is wonderful music from that period. But the lute, it can just do so much more.'

'It's a beautiful concerto to play – but there's not a single chord shape, or progression, in it that I have ever played before'

Over the past two decades, Wadsworth has been quietly but consistently exploring the lute's potential. Of his eight releases, three have earned Editor's Choices (under three different editors no less). The first of them, '14 Silver Strings' in 2003, was a theorbo recital of two early Baroque Italian pioneers of the instrument, Alessandro Piccinini and Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger. For his 2006 'Masters of the Lute' recording, those composers' music was joined by works from Robert de Visée, Dowland and Biber – and the theorbo by an eight-course lute and 13-course Baroque lute (a course being a string or pair of identically-tuned strings). So far, so in keeping with the lute's existing reputation as a historic instrument. Wadsworth's third Editor's Choice, however, reviewed in August 2017, broke new ground. 'Late Night Lute' wrapped pieces by some of the names already mentioned around *The Miller's Tale*, a new suite for theorbo by contemporary composer Stephen Goss. This was no pastiche piece: from the deep, resonant opening notes onwards, we were greeted with a work whose use of the theorbo's idiomatic tuning managed both to somehow reference its Baroque origins yet feel mysteriously modern, even perhaps global, in its searching sense of unfamiliarity. It drew beautifully on the instrument's combination of delicate intimacy and capacity for strength – a poignant balance Wadsworth entrancingly captures across its repertoire.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. What happened in those intervening centuries? The lute, Wadsworth points out, was once 'really the most popular instrument that there was – certainly in the 17th century, when lutes were everywhere; they were in barbers' shops, people's homes ...' So what went wrong? 'Somehow it got too complicated for its own good. You went from the six-course lute to the 13-course Baroque lute, which is a complex animal. It was a victim of its own success.' The theorbo, meanwhile, complicated matters further, adding an extended neck and second peg box, its 14 courses and six-foot length offering more power when accompanying violins and singers and allowing for the deep bass strings that are so much a part of its distinctive voice. And as the centuries moved on, the development of keyboard instruments as the primary choice for accompaniment (and in some ways the evolution of the guitar) only increased the lute's decline. By the 19th century, the instrument had all but vanished.

And yet today, whether in the concert hall or in the pages of *Gramophone*, the lute is no longer an unfamiliar sight – for which much credit is owed to the early music movement, as well as some key advocates. 'It made a big comeback in the 20th century – the timing was somehow right,' recalls Wadsworth, citing the guitarist Julian Bream whose dual passion for the lute doubtless brought it to the attention of substantial numbers of his vast guitar audience. 'And then others followed – Nigel North, Paul O'Dette – who did wonderful things for the lute.'

There were two major hurdles to the instrument's full rehabilitation – the first being the lute's volume. 'How do you bring what is essentially a living-room instrument to audiences? I think there are two ways to do it. One is that you play in living rooms – and I do some of that, I do a lot of house concerts and thoroughly enjoy it. I think it really takes me back to what the lute's all about, just 30 people in a room.' Wadsworth builds such performances around a big concert or festival appearance, and they clearly inspire strong audience engagement – the lutenist says that around 70 per cent of attendees will buy a CD or an album stored on a flash drive. 'You're there with people who can talk to you, and it's very, very rewarding. So that's one way to do it.'

The other way, of course, is by embracing technology – just as guitarists have done (indeed, John Williams was instrumental in advising Wadsworth in this area). 'The vast improvement in amplification technology means you don't have to sound like an





MATTHEW WADSWORTH

in a folk group. I've worked with a Scottish fiddler, and it just lends itself really well because there's so much crossover between Baroque and folk music anyway. It's all down to not restricting our imagination. The 21st century is a really exciting time to be involved with the lute.'

Next month will see Wadsworth release the recording of a new theorbo concerto – the first ever written, no Baroque composer having attempted one – by, again, Goss. To his instinctive feel for the sound, tuning and historic resonances of the instrument, Goss adds other musical styles – from orchestral music that alludes to pastoralism in places and feels very modern in others, to rock-style strumming, to even some very bluesy bass ... 'I think this is the hardest thing I've ever learnt!' says Wadsworth. 'Once it's under the fingers, it's beautiful to play – but there's not a single chord shape, or progression, in the piece that I've ever played before. Some of the rhythms, they don't sound that hard, but when they're written down, you think: "What's that?" In Baroque music we don't play neo-soul funk bass ... Stephen has pushed the instrument way beyond where it's gone before, showing how the

theorbo can lend itself to so many different musical styles.

'For instance, in the *passacaglia*, the slow movement, there's a sustained melody line in the theorbo, and I actually use a plectrum to make that happen. He wanted me to use a bottleneck, like on a blues guitar, to slide up and down, and it really sounded rubbish, but I found a way to get the effect that he wanted. But there's nothing gimmicky in the piece at all, it's really sincere, and just so well written.

'What I love about the piece is that it's also such a strong collaboration between the theorbo and the orchestra and also different solo instruments, because that's what the theorbo does: it plays solo, but it's also very much a textural and accompanying instrument.' All this poses challenges for the orchestra too, ones well met on the recording by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra directed by Benjamin Marquise Gilmore. 'Even with the top orchestras it's never taken less than five hours to rehearse it,' says Wadsworth. 'People have really got to be on board, and committed, and you get a much better performance because of that.

'I've had really great feedback from orchestras and also from audiences – they love it. It changes direction a lot,

electric guitar or a banjo,' laughs Wadsworth. After numerous experiments, he has found his ideal mic placement – 'aligned with the bridge, beneath the top string of the instrument, which seems to pick up all the warmth and all the right sounds' – before putting the signal through a pre-amp and finally into a stereo pair of speakers, which is 'what tricks the ear into thinking the sound is coming from the instrument'. Already we're a long way from the pure simplicity of Renaissance craftsmanship – but why not? The lute can now play to large halls, and even with an orchestra, and still be heard. A problem solved.

But then comes major hurdle number two: modern repertoire. With the lute having fallen out of fashion, no one had really written for it, let alone for theorbo, for a good couple of centuries. 'There's still not a huge amount of contemporary music, and certainly not very much really good music, but I think people are realising that the lute can be used in a lot of different contexts, just as it was in the 17th century. It wasn't just a solo instrument – it accompanied singers, it played in consorts, it played in operas ... And you can do that in the 21st century – it can play with violinists and string players and different groups of singers, and it can actually sound really great



'Calmly undaunted': Wadsworth records Goss's Theorbo Concerto – the world's first, no less – with the Scottish CO

so it keeps you engaged – one minute it's a Wagnerian opening, the next minute you've got this bare landscape with the double bass and the theorbo.' The double bass is a key collaborator throughout: 'It's almost a double concerto,' says Wadsworth. That there was potential for a rapport between these two instruments was only discovered by the lutenist by accident. 'I was doing a gig and there was a double bass player there, and we started to improvise, and I thought, "This sounds really cool". So I said to Steven that I wanted a big part for the double bass. Because the theorbo is so busy going up and down the neck we don't use its bass strings that much, so the double bass is doing what these bass strings on the theorbo would do. It's so cleverly written.'

Wadsworth describes working with Goss as 'a very interactive process' in which they would discuss the structure, the texture, and the theorbo's relationship with other instruments. But if Goss's earlier suite saw him develop an instinctive understanding of the theorbo, it appears that the concerto saw him exert his knowledge with robust confidence. He was very specific about the string on which a note should be played, and Wadsworth laughingly recalls that any complaints by him about a section's unplayability were met with Goss telling him, 'Put your headphones on and work it out!' Goss is currently making a string quartet version of the work. And after that? Wadsworth hopes he, or others, can commission more theorbo concertos: 'This piece really shows that it can work.'

Unlike the lute, whose repertoire is so vast that 'you couldn't get through it in 20 lifetimes', there's not a huge amount of theorbo music, if you discount continuo playing. And while Wadsworth enjoys all lutes, it's the theorbo he's drawn to: 'I have an affinity for it – I don't know why.' It was actually the first kind of lute he played. Having played guitar since the age of six – classical, then electric – he was studying at the Royal Academy of Music when a friend putting on a production of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* asked Wadsworth if he could play

theorbo for it. 'I'd been playing Dowland, and similar composers, on the guitar. The Academy had a theorbo, and so I got hold of this enormous instrument and just wrestled with it. I phoned my friend up and said, "I can't do this, it's driving me mad", and he said, "Just come down – even if you just play one number, just come and do it". And I got hooked, and I just thought I could have such a rich life if I swapped over. It was a huge decision, but in my second year at the Academy I just thought "I have got to do this".'

Before he could, though, he had one further major obstacle to clear. Wadsworth is blind, and while he'd taught himself to read braille music notation as a child, there simply wasn't a system of braille lute tablature. So he invented it. 'I was very lucky that the lute scholar Tim Crawford was working at King's College at the time, and he introduced me to a form of notation that he'd developed for computer language, and I was able to adapt that for braille. It's transformed quite a lot since then, but I've got computer programmes where I can have an electronic lute file, and press the button, and it's in braille

already. So I've got most of the repertoire at my fingertips – literally.' He has since used the same system to launch an online platform at talkingtab.com for visually impaired guitarists: 'I feel that's been my contribution, to make tab accessible in a way that it hasn't been before.'

How Wadsworth's ambitions for the lute develop in the modern age will be intriguing to follow. So skilfully is Goss's concerto crafted that it would be entirely wrong to label it as a fascinating curiosity. But it remains the case that until there *are* more modern works for lute, let alone for theorbo, the instrument's presence with, or among, a modern orchestra will likely remain an unusual one for a while yet. Which is a shame because, as discussed earlier, when it *is* there, it finds itself surrounded by plenty of instruments whose origins lie in a similarly early era, but whose histories fared rather differently.

Wadsworth adds that modernity has helped overcome yet one more hurdle for the lute: that in an age of declining CD sales, with many labels seeing lute recordings as niche and unlikely to sell enough to justify their return on investment, the trend for online listening has worked in the instrument's favour; the increase in streaming and downloading, where anyone can access any music and audiences can explore a greater breadth of repertoire than ever before, has created 'a much more level playing field' he believes. Wadsworth will initially release the Goss concerto as a digital-only 'single' on the Deux-Elles label, home of both that debut '14 Silver Strings' album and his more recent 'Late Night Lute'. He's well placed to experiment with the release and distribution of music: last year, he became Deux-Elles's owner, thus adding 'label manager' to his CV.

Few people I've met seem so calmly undaunted by challenges placed in their path, whether by music or by life itself. If anyone's capable of making the lute an instrument for the 21st century, I wouldn't bet against it being Matthew Wadsworth. **G**
Matthew Wadsworth's recording of Stephen Goss's Theorbo Concerto is released by Deux-Elles in February and will be reviewed next issue

α

ALPHA-CLASSICS.COM

HIGHLIGHTS



ALPHA 440 SIBELIUS COMPLETE SYMPHONIES (VOL. 1)



ALPHA 442 RAMEAU, LULLY, CHARPENTIER, CAMPRA, MARAIS, DAUVERGNE, MONDONVILLE...



ALPHA 439 CLÉRAMBAULT, LEFEBVRE, MONTÉCLAIR, COURBOIS...



ALPHA 437 BOULE DE NEIGE, VERT-VERT, FANTASIO, LE VOYAGE DANS LA LUNE, ORPHÉE AUX ENFERS, LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN...



ALPHA 680 HAYDN COMPLETE SYMPHONIES (VOL. 7) : SYMPHONIES NOS. 9, 65, 67 & MOZART, THAMOS, KÖNIG IN ÄGYPTEN

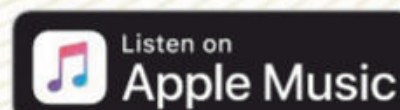


ALPHA 397 LOEWE, SCHUMANN, DEBUSSY, WOLF, POULENC, BARBER, GURNEY, PREVIN...



outhere
MUSIC

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK BY RSK ENTERTAINMENT.



GRAMOPHONE

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Hugo Shirley finds great cause for celebration in the first volume of a projected survey of Schumann's songs from baritone Christian Gerhaher and pianist Gerold Huber



Schumann

'Frage'

Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner, Op 35.
Romanzen und Balladen, Op 49. Drei Gesänge,
Op 83. Sechs Gesänge, Op 107. Vier Gesänge,
Op 142. Warnung, Op 119 No 32

Christian Gerhaher bar Gerold Huber pf

Sony Classical © 19075 88919-2 (73' • DDD • T/t)

Any fan of Lieder will have rubbed their hands with anticipation when it was revealed a couple of years ago that Christian Gerhaher and Gerold Huber's next big project, after an excursion into Brahms's *Die schöne Magelone* and a return to Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*, was to be a complete survey of Schumann's songs. Not all will be sung by Gerhaher, and the booklet for this first volume trails the next, featuring *Myrthen*, in which the baritone will be joined by Camilla Tilling. But most will, and I'd be surprised if the 10-CD box scheduled for release in 2020 does not prove to be a treasure trove of rare riches.

Things seem to start unassuming, though. Gerhaher and Huber set out their stall with the six late *Gesänge*, Op 107, rarely heard together on disc. But they are performed with an exquisitely tender melancholy and *Innigkeit* that goes on to characterise most of the performances on the album. We arrive immediately in these two artists' extraordinary imaginative world, where art only half conceals art, where a sense of straightforwardness and directness comes through the fact that every note has been crafted, every vowel carefully



'The quieter passages in Gerhaher's upper range come across with a beguiling mixture of sweetness and steel'



Christian Gerhaher embarks on a major Schumann project

coloured, every consonant – especially the exquisitely rolled Rs – minutely measured.

But in beginning with Op 107, Gerhaher and Huber are already making a statement. The set starts with 'Herzeleid' (a paraphrase of Gertrude's account of Ophelia's tragic demise), and continues with several songs usually assumed to be designed for a female singer. That this apparently bothers Gerhaher not a jot – the convention doesn't get a mention in his generous and intelligent booklet note – seems typical of his recent shift towards an approach to song more objective than that which he took on his earlier recordings (especially the outstanding *Dichterliebe* from a decade and half ago – RCA, 12/04) – a more presentational than experiential style, one might say. But there's certainly never

any sense of the songs becoming any less moving, communicating less humanity; in fact, the opposite seems to be true.

In the booklet, Gerhaher further explains how he views these sets as cycles bound together by what he calls a 'lyrical dramaturgy', underlying thematic and poetic links. This brings further rewards and insights, not only in Op 107. Gerhaher detects an irony, for example, running through the three *Romanzen und Balladen* of Op 49, which results in a supremely subtle, quietly subversive performance of 'Die beiden Grenadiere'. 'Die Warnung', the only song allowed to stand alone, becomes an infinitely touching study in tender numbness, while the performances of Op 83 and Op 142 (which Gerhaher admits can't be viewed as



Close partnership: Christian Gerhaher and Gerold Huber wear their consummate artistry lightly

a cycle) are every bit as fine. The latter concludes with a performance of 'Mein Wagen rollet langsam' of rare perfection.

At the heart of the programme, though, is one of Schumann's great recognised cycles, the *Kerner-Lieder* of Op 35, which Gerhaher presents as an exploration of loss and remembrance of a former happy life. As such, the outdoorsy numbers come across in almost abstract terms – attempts to recapture recalled feelings and urges – while his 'Stille Tränen', superbly sung, is characterised by something like quiet but futile defiance. But it's in the more internalised songs that he really offers something special: in a desperately moving 'Stirb, Lieb' und Freud!', or in almost unbearably tender accounts of 'Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freundes' (especially as we enter the final verse) or 'Stille Liebe'.

I've barely mentioned the quality of Gerhaher's singing, without which his approach would come to little. The voice is still extraordinarily beautiful; the quieter passages in the upper range come across with an especially beguiling mixture of sweetness and steel. Everything is under astonishing technical control. Only occasionally does one feel a little short-changed with the quieter singing in the lower and middle register, where the sound can be bleached – but it's a small price to pay. Huber's piano-playing, meanwhile, is a constant marvel of sensitivity and control. In every bar you can sense the closeness of the partnership.

Perhaps the greatest achievement, though, is that all this care and attention is worn so lightly: Gerhaher and Huber achieve an almost alchemistic feat in making so much artistry feel so natural. Despite the constant self-reflection, their approach never – to my ears at least – comes close to

self-indulgence. With excellent sound from Sony, this is an album to treasure and to savour – and to listen to again and again. **G**

KEY TO SYMBOLS

£	£10 and over	➔	Download only
£M	£7.76 to £9.99	Ⓡ	Reissue
£B	£6.25 to £7.75	Ⓜ	Historic
£S	£6.24 and below	T	Text(s) included
	(price per disc)	t	translation(s) included
②	Compact disc (number of discs in set)	S	Synopsis included
Ⓢ	SACD (Super Audio CD)	s	subtitles included
DVD	DVD Video	nla	no longer available
Blu-ray	Blu-ray	aas	all available separately
LP	LP	oas	only available separately



Editor's Choice

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings reviewed in this issue

Orchestral



Christian Hoskins hears a disc of Franz Schreker's early music:

'The symphonic overture *Ekkehard* contrasts nobility, passion and violence before an epilogue of rapt serenity' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 45**



David Threasher enjoys a double dose of Schumann's Cello Concerto:

'Playing *Gabetta* and *Capuçon's* recordings back-to-back failed to make a choice between them any the easier' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 45**

Antheil

Symphonies – No 3, 'American'; No 6, 'After Delacroix'. Archipelago. Hot-Time Dance. Spectre of the Rose Waltz
BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / John Storgårds
Chandos © CHAN10982 (67' • DDD)



I was totally smitten by John Storgårds and the BBC Philharmonic's recording of Antheil's

Fourth and Fifth symphonies (6/17) and this new instalment is just as engaging. Here again, Storgårds takes a notably different tack from Hugh Wolff, who put a high value on characterisation and vigorous dramatic trajectory in his pioneering series for CPO. Instead, Storgårds seizes upon the odd strands seemingly left behind from Antheil's experimental, 'bad boy' days, picking out unusual colours, angular countermelodies and surprising harmonic twists.

Pacing is a crucial component for Storgårds, who generally favours broader tempos than Wolff, thus providing unexpected gravitas while also allowing for greater illumination of detail. Listen, say, to the way he shines a light on the bassoons' odd interjections at 2'46" in the first movement of the Third Symphony, or to how his slower tempo and careful attention to orchestral balance – bringing out a subtle smear of dissonance – at 7'32" in the opening movement of the Sixth make the bombastic march sound as much like Ives as Shostakovich. Indeed, Storgårds's punctiliousness makes me believe that Antheil was inspired by Prokofiev and Shostakovich rather than merely cribbing shamelessly from them.

Only in the Third's lovely *Andante*, with its alternation of homespun Americana and Mahlerian nocturne, is Storgårds noticeably brisker than Wolff, oiling the rapidly shifting moods so they glide in a magical, dreamlike fashion. And if Storgårds is too straitlaced in the Milhaud-

esque *Archipelago* – Wolff's account is truly madcap, like the soundtrack to a zany cartoon – he and the BBC Philharmonic have loads of fun in the *Hot-Time Dance*, with its faint echoes of Enescu's First *Romanian Rhapsody*, then dote luxuriously on the Ravelian *Spectre of the Rose Waltz*, with its shimmering colours and slippery harmonies. Very strongly recommended.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Symphony No 3 – selected comparison:

Frankfurt RSO, Wolff (7/05) (CPO) CPO777 040-2

Symphony No 6, Archipelago – selected comparison:

Frankfurt RSO, Wolff (11/00) (CPO) CPO999 604-2

JS Bach

'Concertos for 2, 3 & 4 Pianos'

Concertos – BWV1060^a; BWV1061^b; BWV1062^c; BWV1063^d; BWV1065^e

^ade **Emmanuel Christien**, ^bde **Jacques Rouvier**,

^ce **Audrey Vigoureux** pfs **String Ensemble of the Toulouse Capitole Orchestra / David Fray** pf
Erato © 9029 56322-8 (69' • DDD)



The first thing that strikes you about this disc is the acoustic, and not in a good way.

It's very boomy (the venue is the Carmelite Chapel in Toulouse) and has a tendency to make it sound as if there's a cast of thousands in the strings, which is certainly not the case.

That aside, there's some joyous playing on offer here, with David Fray leading an all-French line-up of keyboard players. First up is the Concerto for four keyboards, BWV1065, whose opening movement has plenty of bounce and pinpoint reactions between the four soloists. Alexandre Tharaud recorded this via multitracking, feeling that this was the only way to get a truly rhythmically taut result, yet this new disc rather belies that notion. The slow movement is a haloed affair in the hands of Fray & co, more overtly Romantic than Tharaud's, and the finale has a rumbustiousness that I find very appealing.

The D minor Triple Concerto, BWV1063, is again full of energy, and the keyboard players are alive to the ebb and flow of the opening movement; by comparison *la famille* Casadesus are positively staid, which is a particular issue in the outer movements. Bach's siciliano middle movement is more forgiving, working equally well at Casadesus's spacious tempo or in Fray's more bright-eyed version.

Among the double concertos, Fray and the aptly named Audrey Vigoureux are particularly telling in the C minor, BWV1062: their slow movement is a true conversation between equals, whereas there's slightly more emphasis on the first keyboard in the account by Güher and Süher Pekinel, though there's no doubting the finesse that the twins bring to everything they do.

In BWV1061 in C major, the fugal finale is another highlight, Fray and Jacques Rouvier sparking off each other to fine effect. But I marginally prefer the Pekinel twins in the opening movement, which is a little brisker. And in the Double Concerto in C minor, BWV1060 (better known in its oboe-and-violin incarnation), again, the opening *Allegro* sounds a touch steady (though not as steady as Robert and Gaby Casadesus), but it's less a matter of speed per se than the phrasing itself – perhaps I've been spoilt by spending too much time in the alluring company of violinist Janine Jansen and oboist Ramón Ortega Quero. That said, the *Adagio's* entwining lines against pizzicato strings are beautifully realised by Fray and Emmanuel Christien, and the finale has plenty of gusto. So overall, don't let a dodgy acoustic put you off some very fine Bach-playing.

Harriet Smith

BWV1060, 1061, 1063 – selected comparison:

R, G & J Casadesus (SONY) 88765 47793-2

BWV1060, 1061, 1062, 1063 – selected comparison:

G & S Pekinel, Zurich CO, Griffiths

(4/05) (WARN) 2564 61950-2

BWV1065 – selected comparison:

Tharaud, Violons du Roy, Labadie

(12/11) (VIRG/ERAT) 070913-2



Trombonist Jörgen van Rijen performs his own arrangements of Bach and Pärt with the Camerata RCO

JS Bach • Pärt

'Fratres'

JS Bach Concertos - after A Marcelllo, BWV974; after B Marcelllo, BWV981; after Vivaldi, BWV972

Pärt *An den Wassern zu Babel* sassen wir und weinten. Fratres. Pari intervallo. Vater unser

Camerata RCO / Jörgen van Rijen *tbn*

BIS (F) BIS2316 (59' • DDD/DSD)



The ever-versatile Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra trombonist Jörgen van Rijen

has done a great deal to extend his instrument's representation on disc by means of new concertos, bold rearrangements and unlikely collaborations. He has taken us into Baroque territory before but this project, which partners two composers who share so much, isn't without its problems.

The first arrives straight away, with the arpeggio figurations that launch Pärt's *Fratres* and the general principle that the ergonomic difference between moving a bow across four strings and shunting a trombone's slide back and forth inevitably sounds in the performance. However plaintive and musically fluent van Rijen's playing is, that difference – and the very

fact that the all-important reposeful responses come from strings, not brass – trespasses too much on the wellspring purity of the piece. The shades of brown in Pärt's *An den Wassern zu Babel* are beautiful but it is the collective ensemble, no single soloist, that makes them so.

Van Rijen's arrangements are his own – with some tweaking of originals by Christian Lindberg – and while it's often said that the notes count more than the instrumentation in Bach, I fear the effect here is once more to apply heavy colouring to music that can't always take it. The Bach concertos can feel stodgy, with unsubtle harpsichord-playing, even before van Rijen's trombone sound grounds them even more. His sound is rounded, warm and perfect without the rasp we would associate with the Baroque (fair enough, as this makes no claims for historical accuracy) but the instrument can feel unwieldy and his appoggiaturas can sound like slips. Sometimes the instrument appears to be in a world of its own and at others the microphones suggest it literally is, as in BWV891, where the impression is that it's at the other end of a long room while we're right there with the orchestra's strings. The net result, like the disc itself, puts us listeners in a strange no-man's-land.

Andrew Mellor

Beethoven • Brahms

Beethoven Symphony No 3, 'Eroica', Op 55

Brahms Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op 56a

Nizhny Novgorod Soloists Chamber Orchestra /

Maxim Emelyanychev

Aparté (F) AP191 (64' • DDD)

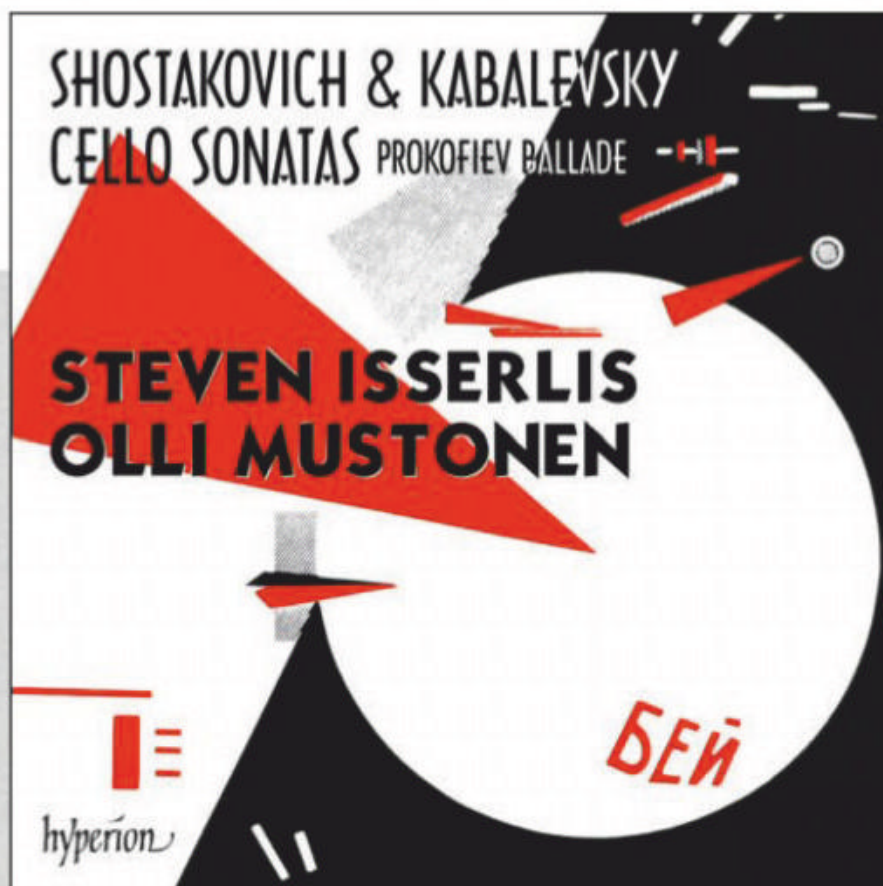


As continuo player for Teodor Currentzis, director of Il Pomo d'Oro –

which has supplied lively backing to concept albums by Joyce diDonato and Franco Fagioli – and recently appointed chief of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Maxim Emelyanychev conducts a brightly lit and suavely rhetorical *Eroica*.

He's directing a hybrid ensemble of musicians from his home city, combining natural horns and calfskin-headed timpani with a traditional pitch of A=440. It's an entirely modern outlook pioneered by Nikolaus Harnoncourt that has recently worked well enough for Currentzis himself and the remodelled Basel Chamber Orchestra under the likes of Giovanni Antonini and Heinz Holliger (on a quite breathtaking new *Great C* major record from Sony – see page 48).

hyperion



A troika of Russian greats: masterpieces and makeweights from Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Kabalevsky. Steven Isserlis and Olli Mustonen navigate the unsettling ambiguities of this music with unerring precision.

CDA68239
Available Friday 1 February 2019

Shostakovich & Kabalevsky: Cello Sonatas

STEVEN ISSERLIS cello
OLLI MUSTONEN piano

An extraordinary programme of late Liszt in wholly sympathetic accounts from Cédric Tiberghien.

CDA68202
Available Friday 1 February 2019

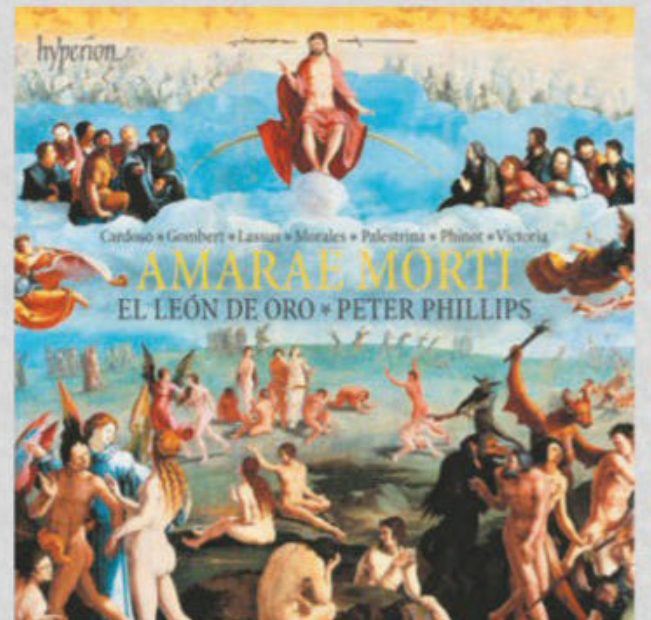
Liszt: Années de pèlerinage, troisième année & other late piano works
CÉDRIC TIBERGHIE piano



From darkness to light: Peter Phillips' journey enlists some of the greatest names from across Renaissance Europe.

CDA68279
Available Friday 1 February 2019

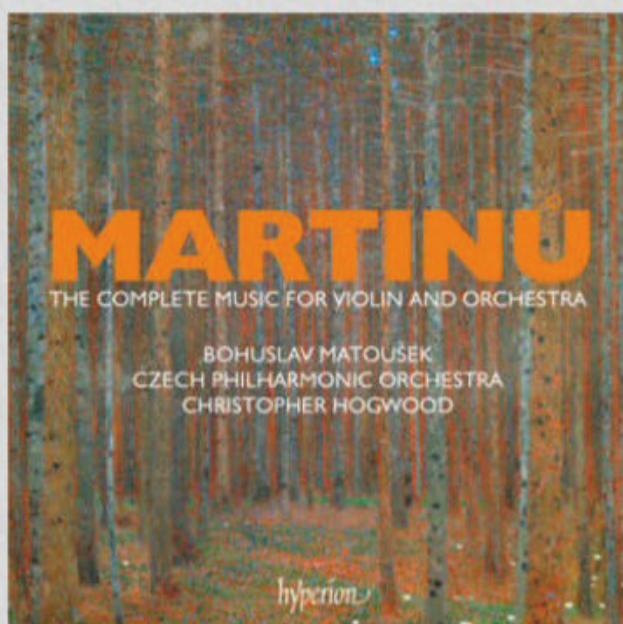
Amarae morti—Lamentations and motets by Cardoso, Gombert, Lassus, Morales, Palestrina, Phinot & Victoria
EL LEÓN DE ORO
PETER PHILLIPS conductor



A four-CD collection of this glorious music, now issued at super-budget price.

CDS44611/4
Available Friday 1 February 2019

Martinů: The complete music for violin and orchestra
BOHUSLAV MATOUŠEK violin
CZECH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD conductor



Eager, alert performances of a composer less often associated with chamber music. A delight.

CDA68243
Available Friday 1 February 2019

Parry: Piano Trios Nos 1 & 3
LEONORE PIANO TRIO



OTHER LABELS AVAILABLE FOR
DOWNLOAD ON OUR WEBSITE



CDs, MP3 and lossless downloads of all our recordings are
available from ***www.hyperion-records.co.uk***

HYPERION RECORDS LTD, PO BOX 25, LONDON SE9 1AX · info@hyperion-records.co.uk · TEL +44 (0)20 8318 1234

In his very last concerts Claudio Abbado demonstrated how a comparatively understated approach to the first movement could build tension in advance of a deeply felt funeral march. But the deep feeling does have to come from somewhere eventually, and I can't hear it under Emelyanychev. A soft-edged and distantly placed recording perspective doesn't help; but in this most horn-led of symphonies their indistinct position in the texture can only count as a disappointment.

When they do emerge from obscurity in the Trio (and the 'gone hunting' section of the *Haydn* Variations in an otherwise forgettably amiable account) the horns are encouraged to play as rustically as possible: a decidedly mixed blessing, though they impart a certain character otherwise missing from Emelyanychev's eminently sensible pacing and lithe, à la mode articulation. He allocates the finale's first variation to solo strings: a tendentious option on scholarly grounds, quirky on musical ones, played here of a piece with the performance's indifference to the scale of the *Eroica*'s endeavour. **Peter Quantrill**

Berlioz

Harold en Italie, Op 16^a. Les nuits d'été, Op 7^b

^bStéphane Degout *bar* ^aTabea Zimmermann *va*

Les Siècles / François-Xavier Roth

Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 2634 (71' • DDD • T/t)



How delightful that François-Xavier Roth and Les Siècles have returned to Berlioz

this year, the 150th anniversary of his death. In 2010 they recorded the *Symphonie fantastique*, revelling in period-instrument colours. Now they turn to a pair of key works: *Harold en Italie* and *Les nuits d'été*.

I'd always been a bit dismissive of *Harold* – a non-concerto for viola which so disappointed the virtuoso Nicolò Paganini after he saw sketches for the first movement that he stomped off in a huff. That was before I saw Antoine Tamestit's revelatory performance at the BBC Proms last season where he demonstrated, in a peripatetic performance clambering about the Royal Albert Hall stage, that it's a work where the viola – Harold – is not a protagonist but a curious observer; not at the centre of the action but skirting the edges.

Returning afresh to the work, this new recording with Tabea Zimmermann has much to recommend it. Roth takes his time. Harold broods circumspectly in the mountains of the first movement, taken at a steadier pace than other period accounts

from Marc Minkowski's Les Musiciens du Louvre or John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. Zimmermann offers a darker, grainier tone than her earlier LSO Live account with Colin Davis but her approach hasn't changed much. The Pilgrims trudge purposefully, while the viola's *sul ponticello* (track 2 from 3'50") is as icy and otherworldly as one could imagine. The third-movement saltarello in the Abruzzi mountains goes with a real swing – Les Siècles' woodwinds on wonderfully picaresque form – and Roth instils fire into the last movement's orgy. Zimmermann is a prudish onlooker here, until Berlioz completely forgets about his soloist for 55 pages of the score – just imagine Paganini's ire if he'd stuck around!

The song-cycle *Les nuits d'été* was composed – for single voice and piano – in 1841 at a time when Berlioz's marriage to Harriet Smithson was unravelling. At this time, he was taking up with the mezzo Marie Recio, who seems to have been the inspiration for these songs to poems by Théophile Gautier. Berlioz orchestrated 'Absence' for Recio in 1843 but the rest of the songs had to wait until 1856 and were each dedicated to different singers ... and different voice types. 'Sur les lagunes' was dedicated to the German baritone Hans von Milde. Recordings of the cycle by a baritone are rare – it is usually appropriated by mezzo-sopranos – but as the booklet writer Bruno Messina points out, 'Male singers are not without their sensitive side, and the words leave room for a masculine perspective'.

One couldn't imagine a more sensitive baritone than Stéphane Degout. Yet his burnished sound has plenty of muscle too, able to splice the air at the line 'J'arrive du Paradis' in 'Le spectre de la rose' so easily that it's (nearly) possible to momentarily forget glorious mezzos like Susan Graham. Degout plunges the depths of despair in 'Sur les lagunes' and 'Au cimetière', his baritone less clouded than José van Dam's recordings (both of the orchestral and piano versions). Perhaps the finale, 'L'île inconnue', doesn't tease quite as much as it could but the burbling Siècles woodwinds are joyous all the same, sailing off on a voyage who knows where. **Mark Pullinger**

Harold en Italie – selected comparisons:

Caussé, ORR, Gardiner (8/96) (PHIL) ➔ 446 676-2PH

T Zimmermann, LSO, C Davis

(9/03) (LSO) LSO0040 or LSO0827

Tamestit, Musiciens du Louvre, Minkowski

(2/12) (NAIV) V5266

Les nuits d'été – selected comparisons:

Graham, ROH Orch, Nelson (SONY) 88843 03097-2

Van Dam, Svizzera Italia Orch, Baudo (FORL) FOR16768

Brahms · Dvořák

Brahms Symphony No 4, Op 98

Dvořák Symphony No 9, 'From the New World', Op 95 B178^a

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra /

Jakub Hrůša

Tudor © ② TUDOR1744 (87' • DDD/DSD)

^aRecorded live at the Joseph-Keilberth-Saal, Bamberg, October 28-30, 2017



In Jakub Hrůša's hands, the opening of Brahms's Fourth becomes a series

of world-weary sighs, an apt lead-in to a reading that's at once elegiac and – with relatively broad tempos and some exceptionally emphatic playing by the Bamberg Symphony – monumental. His interpretation thus stands in striking contrast with Herbert Blomstedt's open-hearted, supple and lovingly detailed 1995 live broadcast recording with the same orchestra (DG, 7/16). Take the woodwind-writing at the very beginning, for example: Blomstedt observes Brahms's phrasing, pairing the off-the-beat crotchets so they mirror the violin's melodic rise and fall; Hrůša's are punctuated individually so they sound simply accompanimental.

Hrůša, chief conductor in Bamberg since 2016, elicits some marvellous playing from his orchestra. Listen to the strings' singing, sinewy tone at 0'55" in the finale, say, or to the eloquent wind solos in that movement's central section. But, in general – and particularly when heard alongside Blomstedt (and please do try to hear it) – I find Hrůša's emotional range overly narrow.

The Czech conductor is slightly more pliant in the Dvořák while conveying a similar sonic grandeur that sometimes borders on the granitic. Again, there are memorable moments: the chaste simplicity of the famous cor anglais solo in the *Largo*, for instance, or the *più mosso* at 4'53", where the strings shiver in the cool, moonlit glow of the woodwinds; and I like the chirpy staccato articulation he etches in the outer section of the Scherzo. But turn to Robin Ticciati, also with the Bambergers (Tudor, 8/15), whose careful attention to the composer's dynamic markings creates a play of light and shade that makes Hrůša's version seem overexposed. Indeed, Ticciati's incisive, flexible, and felicitously phrased performance is far more satisfying on all counts.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Dusapin

À quia^a. Aufgang^b. Wenn du dem Wind ...^c

^aNatascha Petrinsky *mez* ^bCarolyn Widmann *vn*

^aNicolas Hodges *pf* Pays de la Loire National

Orchestra / Pascal Rophé

BIS (F) BIS2262 (79' • DDD/DSD)



Pascal Dusapin continues to be among the most recorded of present-day composers,

and this new BIS disc includes a first outing for *Wenn du dem Wind ...* (2014). Extracted from his most recent opera, *Penthesilea*, it focuses upon the eponymous heroine's acute and ultimately fateful dilemma between love and law, the vocal parts condensed into a single line for mezzo that Natascha Petrinsky renders with keen pathos (if a little unsteadiness) against a stark and brutal orchestral backdrop. Hopefully the complete opera will make it to the UK before long.

Both concertante works have previously been recorded. Notions of 'rising' are explored in *Aufgang* (2011) – whether of ascent in an ethereal first movement, lightness during a central movement which achieves real meditative eloquence, or altitude in a finale where the soloist emerges above the orchestra as if breaking free of accumulated tensions. Carolyn Widmann yields to Renaud Capuçon in finesse but her tonal poise and incisive projection make for a more involving listen. *À quia* (2002) puts emphasis on the absence (or inability) of response, as piano and orchestra vie for supremacy over respectively strident then agitated movements, before the soloist assumes control over the finale prior to a climactic confrontation. Nicolas Hodges finds greater subtlety than Ian Pace here, for all the latter's trenchancy beforehand.

In all three works, the Pays de la Loire orchestra reaffirm the favourable impression of their Dutilleux disc (1/16), idiomatically conducted by Pascal Rophé and recorded with tangible presence. Dusapin admirers as well as those yet to acquire these concertos need not hesitate. **Richard Whitehouse**

À quia – selected comparison:

Pace, Orch de Paris, Eschenbach

(9/04^R) (NAIV) MO782181

Aufgang – selected comparison:

R Capuçon, Rad France PO, Chung

(1/17) (ERAT) 2564 60268-7

Dutilleux • Lutosławski

Dutilleux Tout un monde lointain

Lutosławski Cello Concerto

Johannes Moser *vc* Berlin Radio Symphony

Orchestra / Thomas Søndergård

Pentatone (F) PTC5186 689 (54' • DDD/DSD)



Few of the concertante works premiered by Mstislav Rostropovich enjoy repertoire status.

Among them, the concertos by Lutosławski and Dutilleux were not only written concurrently but have been coupled often since the Russian's pioneering accounts more than 40 years ago.

Johannes Moser maintains a keen focus over the eventful trajectory of the Lutosławski – ensuring absolute poise over those flights of fancy that constantly throw the soloist's rhythmic precision off-kilter before the sardonic entry of the brass; which latter permeate the cello's speculations during the fractious exchanges of the 'Four Episodes' that follow. Many performances rather lose momentum in the Cantilena but Moser neither falters nor sells short this music's rapt eloquence prior to a looming unison chord on lower strings which launches the finale. Here a violent confrontation is graphically characterised, the Berlin Radio Symphony delivering a pulverising response so the soloist's desperate final gasps seem more than usually affecting.

If the Dutilleux might be felt to avoid such extremes, its inspiration in the heady fervour of Charles Baudelaire (extracts from whose verse head each movement) confirms otherwise. Moser eschews any emotional uniformity, drawing a capricious response from the interplay between soloist and orchestra in 'Énigme' then conveying the sombre plangency of 'Regard' to perfection. Nor is the tensile rhetoric of 'Houles' at all overstated, making for a seamless transition into the sensuous unease of 'Miroirs' which, in its turn, sets up a decisive contrast with the 'Hymne', whose startling emergence is cannily paralleled by its teasing evaporation.

Throughout both works, Thomas Søndergård propels the music forwards with a real sense for their vastly different yet equally inevitable destinations. The SACD sound has a convincing overall perspective and Moser's booklet note ably complements his interpretations. Among previous couplings, that by Rostropovich remains mandatory listening while that by Christian Poltéra offers less demonstrative but hardly less persuasive traversals. Anyone coming afresh to these masterly works, however, should now investigate this new release ahead of all others.

Richard Whitehouse

Selected comparisons – coupled as above:

Rostropovich, Orch de Paris, Baudo, Lutosławski

(2/76^R) (WARN) 2564 60901-9

Poltéra, Vienna RSO, van Steen

(2/10) (BIS) BIS-SACD1777

Haydn • JS Bach • D Scarlatti

Haydn Piano Concerto, HobXVIII:11^a. Cello

Concerto No 1, HobVIIb:1^b JS Bach Solo Cello

Suites^c: No 2, BWV1008 – Sarabande; No 3,

BWV1009 – Bourrée; No 5, BWV1011 – Sarabande

D Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K141^d

^{ad}Martha Argerich *pf* ^{bc}Mischa Maisky *vc*

^{ab}Amadeus Chamber Orchestra of Polish Radio /

Agnieszka Duczmal

Fryderyk Chopin Institute (F) NIFCCD052

(63' • DDD)

Recorded live at the S-1 Concert Studio of the

Polish Radio, Warsaw, ^{ad}April 13, 1992;

^{bc}November 26, 1993



The snappily named Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina is happily

willing to go beyond its remit and here presents early-Nineties performances by a pair of larger-than-life musicians in a selection of their party pieces. Martha Argerich has recorded Haydn's D major Concerto at least twice before and Mischa Maisky is no stranger to the C major Concerto. Taken live, these readings display all the individuality of the earlier studio recordings with the added frisson of in-the-moment music-making.

Argerich plays the wonderful slow-movement cadenza by Wanda Landowska that takes the music out of the 18th century into a completely different, hallucinogenic world when translated from the harpsichord to the piano. Her encore, too, creates its own unique atmosphere: Scarlatti's D minor Sonata, long a favourite *bonne bouche*, played in a way that is entirely Argerich's own and that would surely have startled and delighted its composer.

Maisky's cello sings through his concerto and he clearly relishes the challenges of the finale – at 6'11" faster than most (from a comparative selection close at hand, only Alisa Weilerstein – Pentatone, 10/18 – leaves Maisky standing), along with just the slightest loss of coordination that such a thrilling speed brings with it. Three Bach encores are played with Maisky's customary intensity. Lots of applause is retained, and justifiably so.

David Thresher



Precision and responsiveness: the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra impress in Lutosławski symphonies under Hannu Lintu's direction

Haydn

'Symphonies, Vol 24'

Symphonies - No 9; No 37;

No 38; No 63, 'La Roxelane'

Heidelberg Symphony Orchestra /

Benjamin Spillner

Hänssler Classic © HC18024 (67' • DDD)



The cycle of Haydn's symphonies begun by Thomas Fey in 1999 is now well past its two-thirds point. These four works – all in C major – range across a period of over two decades, from one of Haydn's very earliest symphonies to a work compiled from dramatic sources at a time when most of his working life was being taken up by the preparation and production of opera.

No 63 owes its name, *La Roxelane*, to its second movement's set of variations on a theme Haydn had used in some incidental music, while it opens with a rerun of the overture to *Il mondo della luna*. It is performed in the more common second version, which boasts slightly larger orchestral forces than the first and a different minuet and finale (Dorati and Marriner have recorded the earlier

version). Spillner and the orchestra he inherited from Fey convey the nerviness of the outer movements as finely as any other recording, with the advantage of a full complement of repeats, which you only otherwise get with Hogwood (on original instruments). Spillner is also more expansive than Hogwood in that eponymous *Allegretto*.

The earliest work here is not No 9 but No 37, dating from before Haydn's employment with the Esterházy family and thus as much a remnant of Baroque practices as it is a piece of early Classicism. There are later trumpet and drum parts but you'll have to go to the Nimbus or Naxos cycles to hear them. Symphony No 9 is from Haydn's first years with the Esterházys; both of these works are played with an élan and confidence that shows them as worthy prentice works on the way to Haydn's compositional maturity, rather than simply as apologetic, primitive pieces that do little honour to their later counterparts.

No 38 is from the height of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* period but displays little of the eccentricity or drama of its sister works, bar a flirtation with austere counterpoint in the finale. Woodwind and horn players throughout contribute

splendidly, matching the pinpoint accuracy of the string-playing. A harpsichord gently tinkles away in the three earlier works. Collectors of the series will not hesitate; those who wish to explore Haydn's C major byways will also be amply rewarded by these performances. **David Threasher**

Lutosławski

Symphonies - No 1; No 4. Jeux vénitiens

Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Hannu Lintu

Online © ODE1320-5 (57' • DDD/DSD)



Online's association with Hannu Lintu continues with the first and last of

Lutosławski's symphonies. The composer harboured doubts over his First Symphony (1947), but it hardly feels a stylistic cul-de-sac. Roussel's Third is a likely model for its formal trajectory, framed by tersely argued *Allegros* whose energy is bracingly conveyed by Lintu, as is the stealthy interplay of suavity and belligerence in its Scherzo. The highlight is a slow movement whose expressive fervour, building to an apex of anguish, powerfully reaffirms its wartime genesis.

Forward over four decades to the Fourth Symphony (1992), in which Lutosławski's mature idiom reached a peak of sophistication. Not least in its follow-through of 'introductory' and 'main' movements, subsumed into a seamless continuity so the powerfully cumulative later stages emerge inevitably out of the ruminative music (strikingly redolent of Szymanowski) before them. The acerbic experimentalism of *Jeux vénitiens* (1961) feels slightly reined in here, though the capricious flute arabesques of its third section are most alluringly rendered.

Indeed, the Finnish Radio Symphony yield little in precision and responsiveness to that of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Esa-Pekka Salonen, whose integral survey is a strong if not uncontested option. Choice for Lutosławski's symphonies is now extensive, with Stanisław Skrowaczewski's incendiary First (CD Accord) and Roman Kofman's long-breathed Fourth (CPO) required listening. Superbly recorded and comprehensively annotated, Lintu's versions are worth considering, with hopefully a release of the Second and Third Symphonies to come. **Richard Whitehouse**

Symphonies Nos 1 & 4 – selected comparison:

Los Angeles PO, Salonen (6/13) (SONY) 88765 44083-2

Mahler

Symphony No 6 (two performances)

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Simon Rattle

Berliner Philharmoniker (F) (3) (2) + 

BPHR180231 (162' • DDD • DTS-HD MA5.1 & PCM stereo)

Recorded live at the Philharmonie, Berlin, November 14 & 15, 1987; June 19 & 20, 2018
Blu-ray includes 2018 performance and documentary 'Echoing an Era'



This is a brave and yet confident, often

illuminating, always absorbing set. It tells a story of Rattle's history with the Berlin Philharmonic, from his first-ever concert with them to his last as music director. Accompanying them is an hour-long documentary directed by a master of the genre, Eric Schulz, responsible for comparably perceptive films about Karajan and Carlos Kleiber.

Spliced between interviews with Rattle and Berlin musicians is rehearsal footage mostly drawn from Rattle's recent, belated coming to terms with the Eighth Symphony of Bruckner. He struggles to secure ensemble as well as a rapt yet fluid unfolding of the *Adagio's* main theme.

'I was after something more Classical', he confesses later.

It's a struggle of identities, personal and collective, writ large in the opening of Mahler's Sixth. A retired cellist vividly recalls how the Berlin bass used to grow into the chord rather than making a clean attack: 'this is Stravinsky, not Brahms'. That's how they did it in 1987, spreading like an angry blood clot. By 2018 Rattle has indeed achieved a cleaner attack without denaturing the core of the sound, and at a virtually identical tempo weaving the threads of the argument together, Classical-style, rather than letting them clump in a dense and suffocating mass.

Both performances (each burning with grim conviction, the first marginally more orchestrally infallible than the second) have received previous consideration in these pages: the 1987 in a trial run for the orchestra's own label (2/07) and the farewell in September 2018. Schulz's film deserves more attention. 'You don't get stabbed in the back here', says Rattle with the Philharmonie behind him. 'You get stabbed in full view. And I've come to love that – in a weird way.' No less than they did in a posthumous tribute to Abbado, but therefore all the more remarkably, the musicians analyse their outgoing chief's strengths and weaknesses – and he theirs – with a candour unimaginable outside what amounts to a self-governing organisation based in what Rattle calls, not without admiration, or perhaps appreciation for its affinity with his native Liverpool, 'a fantastically bloody-minded city'.

A central sequence encloses a love letter to Haydn and ticks off with pride the orchestra's innovations in education and communication, nurtured and supported by Rattle. Elsewhere, Schulz lets resonant juxtaposition do the work. 'It mustn't be forgotten that we are still a Prussian orchestra', insists another longstanding cellist, Götz Teutsch. Whereas, observes violist Matthew Hunter, Rattle is 'the most unconventional conductor you can possibly imagine'. Something of a conscience as well as senior agitator among the orchestra's ranks in the mould of his predecessor, Werner Thärichen, timpanist Rainer Seegers has a lot of good things to say about Rattle but they all come back, one way or another, to his being an Englishman. And it's he who acknowledges that, as it did with Abbado, the relationship between maestro and musicians immediately improved when Rattle announced his departure. Will they miss him? As oboist Jonathan Kelly admits, only time will tell.


Peter Quantrill

Martinů

Violin Concertos – No 1, H226; No 2, H293

Thomas Albertus Irnberger *vn* **Janáček**

Philharmonie, Ostrava / Heiko Mathias Förster

Gramola (F)  99178 (51' • DDD/DSD)



Like Sibelius, Martinů was initially a violinist; unlike Sibelius,

Martinů composed enough concertante works to fill four CDs, memorably recorded by Bohuslav Matoušek with various colleagues and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of the late Christopher Hogwood a decade and more ago. The only other recordings of both concertos together are the excellent historic accounts from Josef Suk, also with the Czech Philharmonic, and Václav Neumann (coupled with the *Rhapsody-Concerto* for viola for maximum value for money). The Second Concerto (1943) has fared a little better on disc than No 1 (1933) of late, with well-received accounts from Isabelle Faust, reissued a couple of years ago, and Lorenzo Gatto.

If the field is not crowded, the competition is nonetheless fierce. I am pleased to say that these new accounts from Thomas Albertus Irnberger with the Janáček Philharmonie, Ostrava, conducted by Heiko Mathias Förster are fully worthy to rank with these rivals. Irnberger's tone is relaxed and warm, and he is slightly better served by the sound than Matoušek (mainly due to placement, I think) or Suk – but this last is half a century old. What impresses about the newcomer is the understanding between the soloist and orchestra, through the conductor, and their obvious empathy with Martinů's vibrant music. A joy to listen to; a shame they did not add the *Suite concertante* or one of the double concertos to make this a really standout disc. **Guy Rickards**

Comparative versions – coupled as above:

Matoušek, Czech PO, Hogwood

(A/08) (HYPE) CDA67674 or DCS44611/2

Suk, Czech PO, Neumann (9/09) (SUPR) SU3967-2

Violin Concerto No 2 – selected comparison:

Faust, Prague Philb, Bělohávek

(8/08) (HARM) HMC90 1951 or HMA195 1951

Gatto, Belgian Nat Orch, Weller (8/12) (FUGA) FUG589

Mendelssohn

Piano Concertos^a – No 1, Op 25; No 2, Op 40.

Rondo brillant, Op 29^a. The Hebrides, Op 26

^a**Roberto Prosseda** *pf* **The Hague Residentie**

Orchestra / Jan Willem de Vriend

Decca Italy/UCJ (F) 481 7207 (66' • DDD)



Delightful exuberance: Michael Alexander Willens and the Cologne Academy accompany pianist Ronald Brautigam in Mendelssohn's piano concertos

Mendelssohn

Piano Concertos - No 1, Op 25; No 2, Op 40.
Capriccio brillant, Op 22. Rondo brillant, Op 29.
Serenade and Allegro giojoso, Op 43

Ronald Brautigam *pf*

Cologne Academy / Michael Alexander Willens

BIS (F) BIS2264 (74' • DDD/DSD)



No sooner had one account of the Mendelssohn concertos arrived from Roberto Prosseda than another one turned up, this time from Ronald Brautigam. They vividly demonstrate the different approaches that can be taken with this music. The most obvious difference is down to instruments – Prosseda plays a Fazioli and is accompanied by the relatively large-scale forces of The Hague Residentie Orchestra under Jan Willem de Vriend. Brautigam opts for a Paul McNulty piano based on an 1830 Pleyel and is reunited with the Cologne Academy and Michael Alexander Willens, with whom he recorded his Mozart concerto cycle.

To take the concertos first, both bring to the opening movement of No 1 in G minor a fiery energy; but whereas

Prosseda can sound slightly overblown in the accentuation, Brautigam always feels within the scale of the music, while the colours he coaxes from the McNulty are very refreshing. In the slow movement I find Brautigam slightly lacking in poetry compared to, say, Howard Shelley or Stephen Hough. But Prosseda misjudges things, to my mind, his spacious tempo stretching the lines almost to breaking point. On the other hand, I do like the élan with which Prosseda approaches the finale, fearless in the face of Mendelssohn's extremes of virtuosity. Turn to Brautigam, though, and he's even more daring, the air in the textures ensuring that the music never becomes a mere note-fest.

The Second Concerto's *Adagio* has a sweet sincerity in Brautigam's hands but he doesn't quite find the tenderness of Prosseda here (and de Vriend responds with a beautifully shaped orchestral line). By comparison, Hough takes a pretty speedy view of matters, while Thibaudet and Shelley are both positively luxuriant, Shelley perhaps taking things a little too far. Brautigam's finale goes at a real lick, giving it a thrilling one-in-a-bar feel, which is emphasised by the Cologne Academy's absolute precision of ensemble. Prosseda's account is a little more spacious, allowing pianist and orchestra time to relish Mendelssohn's more poised moments to good effect.

Brautigam launches his disc with the *Rondo brillant* and for once the exuberant muscularity of the soloist's opening phrases don't sound unwieldy. The relative lightness of the McNulty instrument ensures that even when Brautigam really plays out, there's no fear of him overwhelming the orchestra, with moments such as crisp figuration in which piano duets with wind (track 1, from 2'50") delightfully realised. Prosseda by contrast sounds a little ungainly.

The Decca disc is completed with a stylish account of the *Hebrides Overture*. From BIS we get the delightful fluff that is the *Capriccio brillant*, Op 22 – in which Brautigam gives Hough's feather-light account a run for its money – and the CD ends with the *Serenade and Allegro giojoso*, in which Brautigam brings a wide range of colour to his opening solo. Hough is particularly good at revealing the simple beauties of the gently billowing *Serenade*, with Brautigam coming into his own in the energetic *Allegro giojoso*. **Harriet Smith**

Piano Concertos – selected comparisons:

Thibaudet, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orch, Blomstedt
(A/01) (DECC) 468 600-2DH

Concertos, Capriccio brillant – selected comparison:
Shelley, LMP (4/94) (CHAN) CHAN9215

Concertos, Capriccio brillant, Rondo brillant,

Serenade and Allegro giojoso – selected comparison:
Hough, CBSO, Foster (9/97) (HYPER) CDA66969



LOVE
MUSIC
HELP
MUSICIANS^{UK}

**Thanks to Help Musicians UK
I could afford to study to
become an opera singer.**

Our work gives people like
Soraya a chance to follow their
dreams.

To find out more or to donate,
visit **helpmusicians.org.uk**
or call **020 7239 9100**.

Registered Charity No.228089

Mozart

Violin Concertos – No 1, K207^a;
No 2, K211^b; No 3, K216^b

London Symphony Orchestra / Nikolaj Znaider *vn*

LSO Live (F) LSO0804 (62' • DDD/DSD)

Recorded live at the Barbican, London,

^aDecember 18, 2016; ^bDecember 7, 2017



Nikolaj Znaider's follow-up to his disc of Mozart's fourth and fifth violin concertos

(5/18) is as enjoyable as its predecessor. While his is essentially an urbane view of these youthful concertos, he finds ample wit and colour in the *Allegros*: say, in the sly *pianissimo* opening of the first-movement development in No 1 or his sense of mischievous glee in the scampering finale, with dynamics and bow strokes inventively varied. Effective, too, is Znaider's hushed, quizzical tone in the minor-key excursions at the centre of No 3's opening movement, and his whimsical delicacy in the finale's dancing 3/8 sections. As on his previous disc, he adds playful, spontaneous-sounding flourishes where Mozart invites them, and provides his own brief, smile-inducing cadenzas.

It's always tricky to bring off the rather old-fashioned opening *Allegro* of No 2; and for all the poise and grace of his playing, I don't think Znaider and the rather solid-sounding LSO quite avoid the danger of stiffness here. Turn to Giuliano Carmignola, with Abbado's period-instrument Orchestra Mozart (Archiv, 9/08), and the movement immediately comes alive, with a lighter, springier tempo and phrasing that skips puckishly over the bar line. And other players, including Carmignola and Pekka Kuusisto (Ondine, 3/04), bring more demotic earthiness – even a touch of wildness – to the quasi-folk episode in No 3's finale, where Znaider favours refinement over rusticity.

The three slow movements, eloquently phrased, gain from the mingled sweetness and warmth of Znaider's 1741 Guarneri del Gesù, though the LSO's contribution in K207 and K211 is slightly dogged, with an under-shaped bass line. Znaider's rapt, withdrawn tone at the centre of K216's Arcadian *Adagio*, *pp* shading to *ppp*, is a moment to savour. If other violinists, including the two mentioned above and Richard Tognetti (BIS, 2/11, A/11) are more naturally attuned to the teenage Mozart's coltish, antic side, Znaider's mingled elegance, colouristic subtlety and sheer tonal beauty should bring enduring rewards. **Richard Wigmore**

Schreker

Ekkehard, Op 12. Phantastische Ouvertüre,
Op 15. Vier kleine Stücke. Vom ewigen Leben^a.

Vorspiel zu einer grossen Oper (Memnon)

^aValda Wilson *sop* Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie

Rheinland-Pfalz / Christopher Ward

Capriccio (F) C5348 (69' • DDD • T/t)



This new Capriccio recording provides a superb demonstration of the variety and

substance of Schreker's music during the early decades of the 20th century. The earliest work here is the symphonic overture *Ekkehard*, completed in 1903 when the composer was 24. Based on a novel about the 10th-century St Gallen monk Ekkehard II, the piece contrasts episodes of nobility, passion and violence before concluding with an epilogue of rapt serenity. The *Fantastic Overture* from the following year has no overt theme but the brooding of its opening section, the restless energy of its development and the triumph of its conclusion suggest a struggle or a journey in the manner of Sibelius's *Lemminkäinen's Return*.

A very different musical landscape is found in the two songs of *Vom ewigen Leben* ('On Eternal Life'), originally conceived for soprano and piano in 1923 and orchestrated four years later. Based on German translations of two texts from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the work represents Schreker's art at its most subtle and introspective. The scoring of the second song, featuring harmonium and saxophone, is especially imaginative and haunting, and the work overall leaves a deep impression.

The *Vier kleine Stücke* for large orchestra date from 1930, a time when Schreker was interested in the opportunities afforded by the new genre of film music. Although not a significant work in the composer's output, the fourth piece demonstrates his ability to conjure melodies of beguiling lyricism and warmth. A career as a film composer was not to be, however, and the *Vorspiel zu einer grossen Oper* of 1933 proved to be Schreker's last completed work, an imaginatively scored piece based on sketches for an unfinished opera on the subject of the Greek mythological hero Memnon.

Christopher Ward's performances convey the drama and colour of Schreker's earlier scores with tremendous panache, while Valda Wilson brings a refinement and inwardness to her performance of *Vom ewigen Leben* that matches the pioneering recording by Christine Barainsky (Koch Swann, 1/98 – nla). The Capriccio booklet

includes texts in German and English, and the recording quality is exemplary.

Christian Hoskins

Schumann

Cello Concerto, Op 129^a. Adagio and Allegro,
Op 70^b. Fantasiestücke, Op 73^b. Fünf Stücke
im Volkston, Op 102^b

Sol Gabetta *vc* ^bBertrand Chamayou *fp*

^aBasel Chamber Orchestra / Giovanni Antonini

Sony Classical (F) 88985 35227-2 (58' • DDD)

Schumann

Cello Concerto, Op 129^a. Adagio and Allegro,
Op 70^b. Fantasiestücke – Op 73^c; Op 88^d. Fünf
Stücke im Volkston, Op 102^e

Gautier Capuçon *vc*

^dRenaud Capuçon *vn* ^{bcd}Martha Argerich *pf*

^aChamber Orchestra of Europe / Bernard Haitink

Erato (F) 9029 56342-1 (78' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Auditorio Stelio Molo, Lugano,

^d2009, ^b2010, ^c2011, ^e2012; ^aConcertgebouw,

Amsterdam, November 12 & 13, 2015

From EMI/Warner Classics ^d607367-2, ^b070836-2

(6/11), ^c644701-2 (10/12), ^e721119-2 (8/13)



Two of today's leading young cellists (born within six months of each other in 1981) alight almost simultaneously on Schumann's Cello Concerto and the works for cello and piano. The two discs are nevertheless conceived, executed and presented in very different ways.

Sol Gabetta plays a pair of 18th-century instruments, and teams up with Bertrand Chamayou on a fortepiano from Schumann's lifetime and with the gut strings and natural brass of the Basel Chamber Orchestra. She is recorded in two studio sessions two years apart and opens her programme with the chamber works, building up to the Concerto. Gautier Capuçon, on the other hand, opens with the Concerto in a concert performance from 2015 and couples it with the chamber works in versions from Martha Argerich's Lugano festival dating from 2009-12.

The microphones focus intently on Gabetta's Guadagnini in the Concerto, intimately capturing the instrument's rich, throaty tone. Capuçon is placed a little further away, although Erato's engineering faithfully reproduces the sheer range of sounds he draws from his instrument (the details of which are not identified in the disc packaging). Playing the two recordings back-to-back failed to make a choice between them any the easier: with Gabetta

the conversation is one-to-one; with Capuçon it is a gripping oration. Antonini's Swiss band, with their soft-toned woodwinds, are a match for Haitink's 'army of generals', guided by the veteran conductor's decades of experience.

Chamayou is beautifully responsive in the chamber works, for which Gabetta switches to a Goffriller. Argerich, for Capuçon, is simply unique and her contribution has been assessed in these pages before. Capuçon's disc also has the benefit of the four *Fantasy Pieces* for piano trio, in which big brother Renaud joins the duo. There is much that is special in both discs, for all their points of correspondence and divergence. While the foregoing may decide you in favour of one or the other of these two quality products, your reviewer, with some relief, is pleased that he gets to keep both. **David Thresher**

Stenhammar

Symphony No 2, Op 34^a. Serenade, Op 31^b

Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra /

Herbert Blomstedt

BIS (F) BIS2424 (84' • DDD/DSD)

Recorded live at Gothenburg Concert Hall,

^aDecember 2013 and ^bJune 2014



Only a few months ago I reviewed Christian Lindberg's brilliant account of

Stenhammar's Second Symphony for BIS, a follow-up to his winsome recording of the Serenade. Now BIS gives us new versions of both works on a single disc. I'll wager the justification for this embarrassment of riches was Herbert Blomstedt, now in his nineties, who only recently added these masterpieces to his repertoire and desired to record them in Gothenburg, where the composer himself served as principal conductor from 1907 to 1922.

Blomstedt's performance of the Serenade (in its 1919 revision) abounds with affectionate detail. I find the *allegro* sections of the Overture, while feather-light, a hair too leisurely compared with Westerberg or Järvi, both of whom are more effervescent. The lyrical interludes are transporting, however – try the lush, hushed hymn in the strings at 2'43". Blomstedt keeps the Canzonetta, a kind of *valse mélancolique*, on its toes, and manages the Scherzo's sudden changes of character with seemingly effortless legerdemain. The Notturmo is so intoxicatingly fragrant and vividly characterised that there seems to be a story hidden in the unfolding of the strings' serenely solemn melody, stealthy

staccato footsteps and delicate warble of birdsong. He doesn't push too hard in the finale, which allows the orchestra to sing with nobility and tenderness.

Blomstedt is similarly patient in the opening *Allegro energico* of the Second Symphony, eliciting a darker, more richly rustic tone than Lindberg, whose Antwerp musicians play with greater transparency and crispness. The *Andante* flows naturally and is exquisitely shaded. Both here and in the joyous contrapuntal intricacy of the finale, Blomstedt's experience as a Bruckner conductor pays off in spades as he spins expansive harmonic sequences in what seems like a single breath. Listen, say, to the double fugue in the latter (starting at 9'32") – riding this massive polyphonic wave gives me a feeling of physical and spiritual euphoria every time I hear it.

I remain indebted to Westerberg, whose recordings introduced me to these works, and admire Lindberg's thoughtful interpretations. But this disc is special. Whether it's the frisson of live performance or the fact that Blomstedt came to these scores late in life and is radiating the joy of discovery, I can't say. What I do know is that whether you're already smitten by this music or have yet to fall under its spell, you really should hear it. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

Symphony – selected comparisons:

Stockholm PO, Westerberg (4/80) (CAPR) CAP21151

Antwerp SO, C Lindberg (A/18) (BIS) BIS2329

Serenade – selected comparisons:

Gothenburg SO, N Järvi (2/87) (BIS) BIS-CD310

Swedish RSO, Westerberg (5/94^R) (EMI/WARN) 268161-2

Gothenburg SO, N Järvi (8/95) (DG) ➔ 445 857-2GH2

Royal Flemish PO, C Lindberg (8/14) (BIS) BIS2058

Haydn Wood

Cities of Romance. Egypta: An Egyptian Suite.

Three Famous Cinema Stars. Festival March.

Manx Countryside Sketches. Royal Castles.

Snapshots of London

BBC Concert Orchestra / Gavin Sutherland

Dutton Epoch (F) CDLX7357 (77' • DDD/DSD)



Within the limitations of the light music genre, Haydn Wood must be viewed as a composer of efficiency and, at best, not inconsiderable class. As his Violin Concerto demonstrates, introduced to many by Dutton (7/10) and revived by Tasmin Little (Chandos, 12/15), passions occasionally approach boiling point in Wood's scores but as a rule are kept in check by the will to entertain in the most straightforward manner possible. In so doing, some tracks here outstay their welcome.

The sun is always shining in Haydn Wood land and his landscapes are often indistinguishable, from the clipped green meadows of Windsor to the windswept ruggedness of the Isle of Man. Where Wood does manage to evoke the particulars of a certain place, the results tend towards off-the-shelf caricature, as in his musical portraits *Cities of Romance* (Budapest, Venice, Seville) and *An Egyptian Suite* – the latter sounding just as you'd expect it to from a mid-century Englishman.

Wood pushes his expression a little more in depictions of Ivor Novello from *Three Famous Cinema Stars* and of Caernarfon from the *Royal Castles* suite, with the hint of something personal wanting to express itself in the latter (both are proof that he could step out of dandy mode and deliver something almost heartening). Wood's orchestration is consistently effective, if not groundbreaking, and the playing here radiates enjoyment, but we hear a few vocal instructions from conductor Gavin Sutherland that puncture the atmosphere.

Andrew Mellor

BA Zimmermann

Violin Concerto^a. Photoptosis.

Die Soldaten – Vocal Symphony^b

^bAnu Komsí sop ^bJeni Packalen, ^bHilary Summers

contrs ^bPeter Tantsits ten ^bVille Rusanen bar ^bJuha

Uusitalo bass ^aLeila Josefowicz vn Finnish Radio

Symphony Orchestra / Hannu Lintu

Online (F) ODE1325-2 (74' • DDD • T/t)



The fragmentary nature of Zimmermann's pre-emptive vocal

symphony on *Die Soldaten* reflects that of his entire artistic outlook – the idea that an indecipherable or disorientating mixture of past, present and future is all that's now attainable in art, and that the cocktail itself can prove prophetic and beautiful. In Zimmermann's Violin Concerto, his concertante snapshot of the entire mid-20th-century European horror show, such beauty is to the fore in a performance from Leila Josefowicz that is more elasticated and lyrical (than, say, Thomas Zehetmair – ECM, 7/09) while the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra are more sharp-edged and immediate (than Zehetmair's WDR Symphony Orchestra). Josefowicz plays the rumba finale with notable grit and pushes the conversation towards the edge of the precipice this composer's music insists on existing at.

Zimmermann's intent that his opera *Die Soldaten* and the vocal symphony that went

KIRKER MUSIC FESTIVALS

FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

Kirker Holidays offers an extensive range of independent and escorted music holidays. These include tours to leading festivals in Europe such as the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago and the Verdi Festival in Parma, as well as Glyndebourne, Buxton and opera weekends in Vienna, Milan and Venice.

We also host our own exclusive music festivals on land and at sea featuring internationally acclaimed musicians. For those who prefer to travel independently we arrange short breaks with opera, ballet or concert tickets, to all the great classical cities in Europe.

THE KIRKER CORNWALL MUSIC FESTIVAL

A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY | 1 OCTOBER 2019

Following on from the annual success of the Kirker Spring Music Festival in St. Mawes, we will return to Cornwall in the autumn joined by the Sacconi Quartet.

Alongside three private concerts, the highlights of our new Cornwall Festival are the visits we make to Boconnoc near Lostwithiel. This magnificent house is set in twenty acres of wonderful gardens. We will be welcomed twice at Boconnoc by Elizabeth Fortescue who lives on the estate – once for a morning concert after which we will stay on for lunch and a talk, and again for an evening concert followed by dinner in the house. The tour is based in the pretty town of Fowey, ten miles from Boconnoc.



Price from £1,567 per person (single sup. £248) including four nights accommodation with breakfast, one lunch at Boconnoc, four dinners – two in the hotel, one at the Hotel Tresanton and one at Boconnoc, three concerts, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities, and the services of the Tour Leader.

THE KIRKER MUSIC FESTIVAL IN MALLORCA

A SIX NIGHT HOLIDAY | 29 MAY 2019

The works of Frédéric Chopin are central to our Festival in Mallorca and for our seventh visit we will be joined by the Phoenix Piano Trio, Marta Fontanals-Simmons, soprano and Lorena Paz Nieto, mezzo-soprano.

Based in the village of Banyalbufar, we will discover the gloriously unspoilt north coast of Mallorca. There will be visits to the picturesque artists' village of Deia, the capital Palma and the villa of San Marroig. Our series of private concerts includes a recital in the villa of the Habsburg Archduke Luis Salvador at Son Marroig.



Price from £2,290 per person (single supp. £189) for six nights including flights, accommodation with breakfast, two lunches, six dinners, five concerts, all sightseeing and gratuities and the services of the Kirker Tour Leader.

THE WEST COAST OF FRANCE: BORDEAUX, ROUEN & BRITTANY

A TEN NIGHT MUSIC CRUISE | 10 SEPTEMBER 2019

with The Chilingirian String Quartet; Simon Rowland-Jones, viola; Carole Presland, piano and Henry Neill, baritone

We set off from Liverpool and enjoy river cruising, spectacular coastal scenery and two historic cities – as well as a programme of world-class music. Our first port of call will be Lorient, then two days in Bordeaux, renowned as the world's wine capital. Sailing around the Brittany peninsula, we will travel almost 70 miles up the Seine as far as Rouen, before our last stop in picturesque Saint-Malo.



Prices from £2,635 per person for an inside cabin or £3,795 per person for a Terrace Balcony Suite for ten nights including full-board, private drinks parties, all concerts, plus exclusive talks and interviews.

THE KIRKER MUSIC FESTIVAL ON LAKE COMO

A SEVEN NIGHT HOLIDAY | 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

The destination for our autumn Music Festival is one of the most beautiful corners of Italy. Lined with villas, cypress trees and low-arching mountains, Lake Como has a peaceful timelessness like no other.

The lake has inspired many composers, and we will enjoy performances by a renowned group of international soloists, including pianists Melvyn Tan and Iain Burnside, tenor Luis Gomes, baritone Sergio Vitaleis, violinist Elisabeth Perry and violist Simon Rowland-Jones. There will be an optional performance of L'elisir d'amore by Donizetti at La Scala in Milan. We stay at the 4★ Imperiale in the village of Moltrasio, the hotel has a lakeside restaurant and a spa with an indoor pool.

Price from £2,947 per person (single supp. £580) for seven nights including flights, transfers, accommodation with breakfast, five dinners, one lunch, five concerts, all sightseeing, entrance fees and gratuities, and the services of the Kirker Tour Leader.



Speak to an expert or request a brochure:

020 7593 2284 quote code GGM

www.kirkerholidays.com



Kirker
FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

GRAMOPHONE *Collector*

A SCHUBERTIAN FEAST

David Threasher immerses himself in a selection of recent recordings of Schubert's symphonies



Long experience: Heinz Holliger uncovers a wealth of detail in Schubert's 'Great' C major Symphony

Schubert completed seven symphonies, conveniently numbered 1-9. The first six are straightforward enough, composed more or less annually between 1813 and 1818, the year he turned 21. Then the numerological problems begin. A seventh symphony was sketched but never orchestrated. The Eighth is the *Unfinished* – so-called, paradoxically, despite being the most finished of a fair handful of symphonic projects from the period 1818-22. The Ninth is the 'Great' C major, a work undeniably deserving its nickname for its scale and ambition, even if only really designated as such to distinguish it from No 6 in the same key, often referred to in all seriousness as the 'Little' C major. Just to make matters more interesting, on the Continent the Eighth is often known as No 7 and the Ninth as either No 7 or No 8. And Schubert himself considered the 'Great' C major his first symphony, acknowledging it as a defining monument of his mature style and deeming it the starting point of the symphonic journey upon which he was ultimately unable to progress.

Whether through sheer coincidence or a more concerted determination to mark the 190th anniversary of the composer's death, last year saw a number of groups launch Schubert symphony projects, offering listeners the opportunity to trace his development from teenage

disciple of Mozart, Beethoven and Rossini to master symphonist, casting his influence – albeit belatedly – across the rest of the 19th century.

Naturally, the influence travelled the other way in the earlier works. Not only do we hear the young composer trying on for size the sound worlds and gestures of his peers and predecessors but there are certain thematic similarities: for example, to the *Eroica*'s finale in the second subject of the First Symphony's opening movement, or to the foreboding 'Chaos' of Haydn's *Creation* in the Fourth's slow introduction. These works, for all their confidence and assurance, still retain a terseness that would give way to the long-breathed lyricism of the preternatural song-writer in the later symphonies. Not that any of the early works is in any way primitive or simply an exercise in pastiche. For all the parallels with the music he heard around him, the voice and the harmonic imagination are unmistakably Schubert's own.

Two new or newish groups start at the beginning. René Jacobs launches a new cycle with the Belgian **B'Rock Orchestra** on period instruments, while **Klangkollektiv Wien** introduce themselves as a gathering of leading Viennese orchestral players majoring on the masterpieces of the city's music. Quite apart from the obvious differences of pitch, you immediately notice contrasting

approaches to tempo, Jacobs's *Adagio* introduction about twice as fast as Rémy Ballot's, and his second-movement *Andante* clearly felt as two-in-the-bar rather than the Viennese players' gentle six. Ballot's minuet could be danced to, Jacobs's couldn't; and the Belgians tick their way furiously through the closing *Allegro vivace* while the Austrians find a more amiable lilt. B'Rock's strings are occasionally a little strained above the stave and the woodwind intonation gamier than the suaver Klangkollektiv. I like both a great deal but find one more relaxing (and, yes, more Viennese) than the other.

Jacobs takes a comparable approach to his coupling of the Sixth Symphony, and it will be fascinating to discover what insights these musicians bring to the later, more expansive symphonies. In the case of Klangkollektiv Wien, an instant answer is provided in a poised, considered and unhurried account of the *Unfinished* Symphony. The same work is the main attraction in a new recording from **Concentus Musicus Wien**, now directed by Stefan Gottfried, who had long acted as Nikolaus Harnoncourt's assistant and is now promoted from within the ranks. An ensemble with such history and experience is always bound to make even the most familiar music its own, as this performance attests.

Even if the late conductor's eccentricities are less evident, the sound is recognisably CMW, built from within, the cellos (Harnoncourt's instrument) and basses the dark, woody nucleus of the tone, the upper strings haloed with silvery resonance, the woodwind fruity and full. The added twist here is that the *Unfinished* is finished, using the extensive but unorchestrated scherzo sketch as tricked out by Nicola Tamale and Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, and borrowing an entr'acte from *Rosamunde* for the finale.

It's all genuine Schubert, albeit with a little help from modern editors, but whether it's music worthy to occupy the same ground as the two transcendent opening movements remains moot. One might feel that Schubert left the *Unfinished* unfinished because he couldn't at that time come up with further music on the same exalted level for the scherzo and finale. Undeniably worthwhile, however, is the selection of songs, orchestrated by Webern and Brahms, with which the disc opens. Most of them are subdued in mood, with the exception of a tense, uneasy 'Gruppe aus dem Tartarus'. Florian Boesch's burnished baritone is ideally

suiting and the Concentus shine a revealing light on the unfamiliar orchestral colouring of the piano parts.

Jan Willem de Vriend also embarks on a Schubert cycle, coupling the Second and Fourth Symphonies. **The Hague Residentie Orchestra** is (or sounds) larger than the others here but Pentatone's engineering prevents the band's dimensions from becoming more than the music can bear. If chamber-size ensembles and period instruments offer more agility, that doesn't prevent these performances from distilling just the right atmosphere, especially in the dark-hued *Tragic* (No 4).

Heinz Holliger, too, moves from Schumann to Schubert and from Cologne's radio band to the period instruments of the **Basel Chamber Orchestra**. Having performed the 'Great' C major with the orchestra in 2015, he and the players decided to record all the symphonies, a project whose first fruits are contained on this disc of the Ninth (designated No 8 on the disc packaging) and the Overture to *Die Zauberharfe* and which is due to be completed this year.

Holliger's long experience as a pioneering oboist is evident in his acute attention to woodwind sonority. Viennese horns and narrow-bore trombones bring clarity to the texture, while those proto-minimalist string figures that power the engine of the symphony are weighted a little lower in the sound mix than is often heard. A wealth of detail is thus uncovered in one of those rare performances that compels from start to finish, even if the odd corner here or there is not as neatly turned as it might have been. Perhaps they could have played it righter, but they could hardly have played it better. **G**

THE RECORDINGS



Schubert Symphonies Nos 1 & 6
B'Rock Orch / Jacobs
Pentatone (P) PTC5186 707



Schubert Symphonies Nos 1 & 8
Klangkollektiv Wien / Ballot
Gramola (G) 99180



Schubert Symphony No 8
Concentus Musicus Wien / Gottfried
Aparté (A) AP189



Schubert Symphonies Nos 2 & 4
Hague Residentie Orch / de Vriend
Challenge Classics (C) CC72739



Schubert Symphony No 9
Basel CO / Holliger
Sony Classical (S) 19075 81438-2

before it would speak of 'yesterday, today and tomorrow' can be read on a multitude of levels but in using a play that foreshadowed Büchner's *Woyzeck* and a musical language that is the successor to Alban Berg's, we have one obvious manifestation. There is just enough in these fragments to reveal the human detritus at the heart of the story but, again, the power is often there in the lack of continuity – what we don't see or hear – while the symphonic presentation offers a clearer vision of Zimmermann's Berg-like structuring of each scene along highly formal lines. There is a beautiful strain in the writing and despite this different tension, a certain laissez-faire attitude as if Lulu has dismissed half her orchestra and told the rest to take their shoes off. Anu Komsis is consistently on her toes as Marie. The music and its questions are strong enough to ensure the 'tomorrow' the composer speaks of remains all of our tomorrows.

The Intermezzo, with fulsome organ chords and all manner of quotation, reflects Zimmermann's orchestral Prelude after Yves Klein, *Photopsis*, a work that reminded many of Zimmermann's power and originality when it opened the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg two years ago. It is a reflection of Zimmermann's ideas about collage in relation to form but could just as easily be viewed as a rhapsody on the pregnant instability of the wobbling semitone with which it starts. This recording starts out quite clinical and the very opposite of spatial but there's no doubting Lintu's ability to draw the collage together to a single point of focus and a thrilling climax. Every Zimmermann recording is one to be welcomed but this one is delicious in its variance. **Andrew Mellor**

'New Year's Concert 2019'

Hellmesberger *Elfenreigen*. Entr'acte-Valse
E Strauss *Mit Extrapost*, Op 259. *Opern-Soirée*, Op 162 **Josef Strauss** *Sphärenklänge*, Op 235. *Die Tänzerin*, Op 227. *Transactionen*, Op 186 **J Strauss I** *Radetzky Marsch*, Op 228 **J Strauss II** *An der schönen blauen Donau*, Op 314. *Die Bajadere*, Op 351. *Egyptischer Marsch*, Op 335. *Express*, Op 311. *Im Sturmschritt*, Op 348. *Künsterleben*, Op 316. *Lob der Frauen*, Op 315. *Nordseebilder*, Op 390. *Ritter Pásmán - Csárdás*; *Eva-Walzer*. *Der Zigeunerbaron - Overture* **Ziehrer** *Schönfeld-Marsch*, Op 422
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra / Christian Thielemann
Sony Classical (S) 19075 90282-2 (110' • DDD)
Also available: (M) ③ 19075 90288-1;
(F) DVD 19075 90285-9; (F) 19075 90286-9
Recorded live at the Musikverein, Vienna, January 1, 2019



It was surely only a matter of time before Christian Thielemann was invited to conduct

the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Day concert, and enthusiasts of Thielemann's work will be impressed by the result – though there's plenty here to please anyone who loves this music.

Thielemann's programme is filled with genuinely worthwhile rarities, in addition to more familiar fare – including two exquisitely scored lollipops by the VPO's one-time conductor Joseph Hellmesberger. The outer sections of his *Elfenreigen* sound as if a Mendelssohn scherzo has been dipped in icing sugar; Thielemann handles it delicately, and gives a charming lilt to Josef Strauss's *Die Tänzerin*. Eduard's *Opern-Soirée* is delicious. But faster polkas such as *Im Sturmschritt* never quite fizz, and final cadences (*Express* is a case in point) can sound slapdash – though, in fairness, the *Ritter Pásmán* csárdás has the verve and headlong momentum of a cavalry charge. It's terrific.

Elsewhere, it's probably wisest not to get too hung up on any preconceived notions of Viennese style. Unsurprisingly, the Wagnerite Thielemann leans towards the dramatic in larger-scale waltzes: powerfully atmospheric in the slow introductions to Josef's *Transactionen* and Johann II's *Nordseebilder*, and thrillingly grandiose (savour that Viennese horn sound) in the 'Eva-Walzer'. The dance sequences themselves are on the languid side – not to say earnest. Transitions are occasionally awkward and there isn't really a moment in the concert where a solo player sounds like they're being allowed off the leash. In the *Egyptian March*, the VPO players should consider taking singing lessons from the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

Thielemann often attracts comparisons with Karajan but against Karajan's transcendent 1987 *Sphärenklänge* the younger conductor's reading is earthbound, if still beautiful – an impression reinforced by an icily majestic *Blue Danube* and a *Radetzky March* that definitely feels more Hohenzollern than Habsburg. Perhaps, in these po-faced times, we get the New Year's Day concert we deserve, and there are those, still unconvinced of Strauss's genius, who might respond to such imposing performances. There'll never be only one way to play this repertoire and for 2020 there's the promise of Andris Nelsons: a conductor without a trace of the bandmaster about him. **Richard Bratby**

Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony

Gianandrea Noseda talks to Peter Quantrill about Tchaikovsky's fate-fuelled symphony

I was down in the dumps in the winter while writing the symphony', Tchaikovsky wrote to his sponsor and confidante Nadezhda von Meck, 'and it is a faithful echo of what I was going through at that time.' Goodness knows how much sunny-tempered music has been composed in the depths of depression – Beethoven's Second, for one – but it's hardly possible to separate the tortured episode of Tchaikovsky's ill-advised and even more ill-fated marriage in 1877 from the Fourth Symphony and the Violin Concerto he wrote in its aftermath.

Gianandrea Noseda knows all this – 'but I have to deal with what's in front of me'. As Co-Principal Guest conductor of the LSO since 2016, he prizes the orchestra's performing heritage of Russian music cultivated by André Previn in the 1960s, deepened and accented in their own ways by first Mstislav Rostropovich and then Valery Gergiev. With Sir Simon Rattle a very selective interpreter of Russian music, the LSO board chose wisely in appointing Noseda, who cut his teeth as an assistant to Gergiev at the Mariinsky, who has the Russian as well as Italian operatic traditions at his fingertips, and who can perceive both repertoires feeding into Tchaikovsky's Fourth. 'I'm aware of these traditions', he says, 'but they're not a straitjacket.'

Almost all the symphony's themes are subject to a swirling, ineluctable gravity that, as he observes, pull the listener down with them 'like a *Götterdämmerung*'. Tchaikovsky's awareness of contemporary opera – most especially Verdi – is writ large in this symphony as it is in no other. Rather than fate knocking on the door of Beethoven's Fifth, the Fourth Symphony's opening surely draws on the doom-laden fanfare to *La forza del destino*, which Verdi had written for the St Petersburg Bolshoi Theatre 15 years earlier.

Noseda agrees that, along with the finale of the Sixth, the Fourth's opening movement is the most completely satisfying structure Tchaikovsky ever wrote. He observes that the contrasting second theme is only marked 'in the *movement* of a waltz': 'because it isn't really a waltz. It's too unstable for that. The accompanying quavers are off the beat.' The conductor has to handle metrical location like this throughout the symphony: you could even count it as Brahmsian motion were Tchaikovsky not so dismissive of his German contemporary. Later on, in the movement's coda, says Noseda, 'I conduct the offbeat brass with my eyes, against the strings on the beat with my hands.' For him, the return of the waltz theme



Gianandrea Noseda, like his LSO musicians, draws on many years of experience in Russian repertoire

is reminiscent of a crux point in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, where Natasha calls to mind the dance she shared with Andrei before she leaves him for ever.

The second-movement *Andantino* opens with an oboe melody as instantly evocative as Tatyana alone in her bedroom – to which the bassoon responds like a baritone. Again, however, Tchaikovsky has specified that it should be sung 'in the style of a canzona' rather than an aria. Noseda works hard with the oboist in order to articulate the upbeat to each section of the phrase so that the solo does not emerge in a bland and unbroken stretch of legato – but also in order to establish a relationship of dynamic collaboration with the musicians, and that's as relevant whether he's conducting the LSO or the BPO. 'I don't want them to think they know how this goes.'

I'm reminded of an occasion some years ago when, in a rehearsal for Beethoven's Ninth, he had the City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus run through the finale. 'Very good,' he said. 'You did Simon Rattle's performance perfectly. Now can we do mine?' With a similarly personal emphasis on the pathos underscoring the symphony as a whole, he stresses the painfully chromatic F against the repeated accented E in the coda to this G flat major movement.

Noseda considers the option (taken by some conductors) of the upper strings holding their fiddles like guitars for the famous pizzicato Scherzo, but points out that a full, strumming sound isn't what he's looking for. 'I ask the

strings to play as if they were creating soap bubbles. And then – pop! – they burst and fall.’ He’s after a complementary sonority from the brass in the Trio: ‘Asking trumpets to play pizzicato is ridiculous, but they understand what I mean. It should be like a toy march.’ His trick in this movement is to beat slightly ahead of the musicians, and the breathless, almost flustered mood sets the scene for the broad Mussorgskian humour of the Trio’s main theme – ‘*pomposo*, like an Italian promenade – we dress up and we go out’ – where the bassoon’s starring role is then mocked by an upstart clarinet, like Goldenberg and Schmuyle or Peter with his Grandfather.

In another sense the Scherzo is the most Classical part of the symphony, where Tchaikovsky pays homage to his idol Mozart just as he does at the centre of *The Queen of Spades* with a neoclassical divertimento: Nosedà quotes line and verse from Tchaikovsky’s lyric study of manic obsession, and he sees the Fourth as a symphonic counterpart.

‘I ask the strings to play as if they were creating soap bubbles. And then – pop! – they burst and fall’

‘Look, *fuoco* means fire,’ he says, referring to the tempo marking of the finale. ‘But I don’t want a huge blaze. It’s more like the heat above the tip of a candle – ouch! He doesn’t just say *Allegro con brio*.’ The challenge here is that the strings play each semiquaver of the rushing downward scale with a separate bow while the winds articulate in groups of four. Nosedà embraces and encourages the tension this creates, not least in order to maximise the contrast with the folksong idiom of the second theme which Tchaikovsky has hitherto strenuously avoided: one way in which the Fourth marks a decisive break with the preceding ‘early’ symphonies.

As in the first movement, Nosedà points out Tchaikovsky’s formal ingenuity in treating the second theme first in canon, then in diminution (shorter notes) and finally in *stretto* (overlapping entries) towards the coda, as if he were taking on the German tradition with a point to prove about how a Russian composer could write a ‘proper’ symphony (his successors struggled with a similar prejudice). The strings and winds reverse their legato/staccato articulation during the course of the finale as if putting on each other’s costumes, and in their ever more frantic exchanges Nosedà discerns an instrumental counterpart to the tavern banter of Verdi’s *Falstaff*: ‘Eh! Pistola! Bardolfo!’ Each time the second theme returns, its character changes: from folksong, to opera, and finally ballet: ‘This is pure *Swan Lake*,’ he says.

This final thematic transformation presages the most ‘new symphonic’ gesture of all: the return of the motto theme fanfare, in the manner of Bruckner’s and Brahms’s Third, Schumann’s Fourth and (father of them all) Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*. The final pages should raise the temperature of the finale’s ‘*con fuoco*’ to white heat according to Nosedà, even if no further tempo modification is marked after ‘Tempo I’ in the coda: ‘Tempo changes like this don’t need to be marked. They can be understood.’ And as we turn into the final page it’s impossible to hear the music without an *accelerando* – ‘Thank you and good night!’, says Nosedà, and closes the score with a flourish. **G**

Gianandrea Nosedà’s recording of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony on LSO Live is released on February 8 and is reviewed next month

London Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Nosedà

TCHAIKOVSKY

Mussorgsky
Pictures at
an Exhibition

Symphony No 4

Available 8 February
Hybrid SACD | Digital

Listen on
Apple Music

Isolive.co.uk

LSO

Chamber



Richard Whitehouse is impressed by a disc of Panufnik's string quartets:

'The Second Quartet was inspired by childhood memories of hearing telegraph wires resonate in the wind' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 55**



Richard Bratby enjoys a Polish album from violinist Jennifer Pike:

'She approaches the Szymanowski with a tone of glistening, succulent sweetness, coupled to sensuous phrasing' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 59**

T Armstrong

Akin^a. Dance Maze: Variations for Piano^b; Duos for Trumpet and Piano^c. Diversions 3^d. Divertissements^e. Morning Music^f
^aSimon Desbruslais *tpt* ^dAudrey Riley *vc* ^dJames Woodrow *elec gtr* ^{bc}Jakob Fichert, ^aNicola Meecham *pf* ^eFidelio Trio (^aDarragh Morgan *vn* Robin Michael *vc* ^aMary Dullea *pf*) Resonus © RES10230 (78' • DDD)



Revision is the key element in this programme of music by Tom Armstrong

(b1968). At its most straightforward, in the concluding work for violin and piano, *Akin* (2008), this amounts to minor adjustments such as any composer might seek to make after a performance or ahead of publication. At the other extreme lie the piano trio *Divertissements* (2009) – based on an earlier work for electric guitar and harpsichord, and itself undergoing a further revision – and *Diversions 3* (2015), a more thoroughgoing recomposition of the same original, dropping the harpsichord for an optional extra instrument, in this account the cello of Audrey Riley. It is fascinating to hear the triologue of the one recast as a multifaceted duologue in which the players can begin on any page and play or omit whichever they like – but never reprise one.

Diversions 3 here is noticeably (about 50 per cent) longer than *Divertissements* and the same is true for the two versions of *Dance Maze*. The original Variations (1994) have been twice revised (2008, 2017), by which time Armstrong had created *Duos* for trumpet and piano (2016-17). Here again the original's structure has been fundamentally altered so both are independent works on the same material. *Morning Music* (2012-15) is a finale-heavy suite for piano, its three movements collated in stages. The finale, 'Aubade', also exists as a 'severe compression', *Replay* (2015), not included here.

The performances are committed, the standouts being Jacob Fichert's of *Dance*

Maze: Variations, Simon Desbruslais's of *Duos* (accompanied by Fichert) and the Fidelio Trio's *Divertissements*, but in truth they are all first-rate. If Nicola Meecham's account of *Morning Music* does not make the same impression it is because, in my view, the piece is overbalanced by the finale. Excellent, clear sound from Resonus. **Guy Rickards**

JS Bach

Six Solo Cello Suites, 'recomposed by Peter Gregson'

Peter Gregson *vc/synths* with **Ben Chappell, Reinoud Ford, Richard Harwood, Katherine Jenkinson, Tim Lowe** *vcs*
DG (M) ② 483 5529GH2 (113' • DDD)



DG's 'Recomposed' series was launched 13 years ago with a disc featuring

electropop-style arrangements of classic 19th-century orchestral recordings by Matthias Arfmann. If the main goal of the series was to demonstrate the extent to which the revered label was willing to move along with the times, expunging notions of old-school stuffiness, then 'Recomposed' has probably served its purpose.

Nevertheless, the musical results have been at best mixed and the series has not been without its detractors. Criticism has been directed not so much at the deconstruction of the classics per se but rather at the basic approach taken towards the material itself: a case of 'choose a snippet from the original then spin it out into a two-minute ditty with pop chord progressions underneath'. Robbed of its original harmonic and melodic identity, the overriding impression one gained was of tonal music caught in a minimalist web.

Recomposed Bach by Peter Gregson may finally persuade doubters of the series' artistic worth. This ambitious project sees the gifted cellist and composer reworking all six Cello Suites in a double-CD package lasting almost two hours. Gregson is

certainly willing to mix things up. Some movements, such as the Minuets in the First Suite, the Prelude in the Second and the Sarabande in the Third, remain largely faithful to the original, featuring Gregson on solo cello. Others place him alongside four other cellists in a quintet combination that augments the original music's colouristic scope, sometimes underlaid by a panoply of looped synth patterns.

There's plenty of invention on display, ranging from Steve Reich-like phase patterns in the Allemande of the First to more Brian Eno-like ambient soundscapes in many of the Sarabande movements. The impression in the latter is of the original as a distant but still-recognisable voice, filtered through several generations of echo chambers. While the 'looping snippet' idea forms the basis for some movements, Bach's phrasing is retained for several others, where a prism-like effect is created via a delicate weave of gently reverberating and floating synth and cello lines.

Gregson has also partly succeeded in imbuing each Suite with its own character, with the Fourth creatively assertive, the Fifth darker and more ominous, and the Sixth affirmative and uplifting. Some will no doubt point to the ever-resourceful and infinitely recyclable potential of Bach's own music as the recipe for this project's success but that shouldn't take away from Gregson's own very important contribution as its principal performer and 'recomposer'.

Pwyl ap Siôn

Bartók • Schumann

Bartók Violin Sonata No 1, Op 21 Sz75.

Hungarian Folk Tunes (arr Szigeti from For Children, Sz42) **Schumann** Violin Sonata No 1, Op 105. Drei Romanzen, Op 94

Stephen Waarts *vn* **Gabriele Carcano** *pf*
Rubicon © RCD1027 (73' • DDD)



Stephen Waarts paired Schumann and Bartók for his debut recording because, he writes in a



Precision and clarity: violinist Stephen Waarts and pianist Gabriele Carcano play Bartók and Schumann

booklet note, 'intense expressivity' is so characteristic of both composer's styles. I wouldn't argue the point but I do find it somewhat perplexing, as his interpretation of Schumann's A minor Sonata isn't especially intense. Waarts's tone is just gorgeous – rich and singing, its sweetness balanced by a dark lustre. In the first movement, he and pianist Gabriele Carcano put lyricism at the forefront, paying scant attention to the myriad sforzandos and off-beat accents that give the music its emotional volatility. They also play the central *Allegretto* more tenderly, and less playfully, than most, while the finale feels note-heavy and sluggish. It's admirable how they hew closely to the metronome mark, but I prefer how Anthony Marwood and Susan Tomes, at a nearly identical tempo, seem to lean bravely into the pelting hailstorm of semiquavers (Hyperion, 8/01). The *Three Romances* (originally for oboe) are played more persuasively, particularly the ballad-like third, where Waarts and Carcano prove themselves imaginative storytellers.

Bartók's *Hungarian Folk Tunes* are even more sharply characterised. (These seven pieces from the large piano set

For Children are arrangements by Joseph Szigeti, although Rubicon shamefully makes no mention of this anywhere.) Waarts shows his tonal range more fully here. His hoarse eloquence and subtle portamento in the first is as ravishing in its own way as his silken, golden tone he spins in the *Andante sostenuto*.

But it's Bartók's First Sonata that's the prize here. Waarts and Carcano navigate the work's varied, often thorny terrain without a misstep, and reveal so much in the score that's wondrous and beautiful. There's magic in the slow movement's delicate atmosphere, thanks to long-breathed phrasing and some breathtaking soft playing. Then, in the finale, they generate tremendous excitement through rhythmic precision and clarity rather than by going on a hell-for-leather rampage, as Kremer and Argerich do in their hair-raising live account from Berlin (EMI, 6/09). I love Carcano's articulate rumblings at 2'15", so startlingly clear and creepy. Waarts digs in fiercely when called for, yet his control is never in doubt. What a joy to hear even the highest-lying passages realised with such assurance and finesse. I'm convinced he's the real deal.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Jacquet de La Guerre

'Chamber Music from the Brossard Collection'

Preludes – A minor; D minor; G minor. Tocade in F. Four Trio Sonatas. Two Violin Sonatas

The Bach Players

Coviello © COV91815 (68' • DDD)



Recordings of Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre's harpsichord music

are not rare; recordings of her chamber music are. Yet in the story of how French music gradually fell under the influence of Italian, her sonatas of the early 1690s played a vital part, being among the very first to come from the pen of any French composer. More importantly for us today, however, is their quality and character; these are no slavish imitations of Corelli but works which marry features of the Italianate sonata to a personality that is both individual and firmly French. Considering some of the more derivative Baroque sonatas that have been recorded over the years, the four trio sonatas and two violin sonatas presented here demand a hearing.

ESTONIAN PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER CHOIR (EE) & THE NORWEGIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
 POLYPHONY & STEPHEN LAYTON (UK)
 KÖLNER AKADEMIE (DE) & MICHAEL ALEXANDER WILLENS (US)
 AARON CARPENÉ (AU)
 BLINDMAN [SAX] (BE)
 DUNEDIN CONSORT & JOHN BUTT (UK)
 THE NORWEGIAN SOLOISTS' CHOIR & THE NORWEGIAN RADIO ORCHESTRA
 VOCES SUAVES (CH)
 TRYGVE SEIM RUMI SONGS (NO/SE)



OSLO INTERNATIONAL CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

22-31 MARCH 2019

CLIMATE CHANGES///ARVO PÄRT///TE DEUM
www.oicmf.no /// info@kirkemusikkfestivalen.no

32 PROJECTS
 25 NATIONS
 1186 PERFORMERS



Gramophone Choice Recordings

Disc of the month

Bach J S	Sonatas & Partitas (2cd)	Carmignola	£13.50
Berg	Wozzeck (DVD)	Maltman, Albrecht	£22.50
Borodin	Prince Igor (3cd)	Theatre Belgrade, Danon	£15.00
Chaminade	Piano Music	Mark Viner	£12.00
Handel	Serse (3cd)	Fagioli, Emelyanychev	£24.50
Liszt	Sardanapalo, Mazeppa	El-Khoury, Karabits	£12.00
Lutosławski	+ Dutilleux Cello Concertos	Moser, Søndergård	£12.00
Purcell	King Arthur (2cd)	Vox Luminis, Meunier	£19.00
Schumann	#Frage	Gerhaher, Huber	£11.00
Shostakovich	Cello Sonatas + Kabalevsky etc.	Isserlis, Mustonen	£11.00
	Blues Dialogues	Rachel Barton Pine	£12.00
	Reflections	Tarasevich-Nikolaev	£11.00

Recent Recommended Releases

Bruckner	Symphony No. 9	Jansons	£12.00
Mahler	Symphony No. 2	Cooke, Hughes, Vänskä	£10.50
Mahler	Symphony No. 3 (2cd)	Roth	£12.00
Mendelssohn	Piano Concertos	Orpheus CO, Lisiecki	£11.00
Mozart	Symphonies 40 & 41 (SACD)	Manze	£12.00
Respighi	Roman Trilogy	Falletta	£ 7.00
Schubert	Symphonies 3, 5 & 8	CBSO, Gardner	£11.00
Schumann	Fantasiestücke, Grande Sonata etc.	Bavouzet	£11.00
Tchaikovsky	Symphony No. 4 + Mussorgsky	LSO, Noseda	£ 8.00
Weber	+ Schubert Piano Sonatas	Paul Lewis	£11.50
	Complete DG Recordings (50cd)	Ozawa	£85.00

Free Monthly New Release & Special Offer Listings

We accept payment by Cheque / Visa / MasterCard

Postal Charges UK - First item £1.50, then £0.50 per item Box Sets £3.00
 Maximum UK postage charge = £3.00

Europe - First item £2.00, then £1.00 per item Box Sets from £2.50

Outside Europe at cost Prices valid until 30.03.19 and include VAT at 20%

Office Hours Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm Answerphone on Wednesdays

Orders: 01787 882223 Classics Direct

91 North Street, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1RF. UK E-mail: sales@classicsdirect.co.uk

www.classicsdirect.co.uk to view our special offer listings

The 6th Manchester International Piano Concerto Competition for Young Pianists

21-27 August 2019

Stoller Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester

Founder: Murray McLachlan

ENTRY CATEGORY

- 22-and-under

EMINENT JURY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERT PIANISTS

under the chair of Murray McLachlan

PRIZES

Participants perform for over £3,000 prize money, performance opportunities, bursaries for study, scholarships

FINALS to be accompanied by Manchester Camerata with conductor Stephen Threlfall

In association with



email: info@pianoconcertocompetition.com

www.pianoconcertocompetition.com



Dóra Ombódi and Sławomir Rozlach join the Apollon Musagète Quartet (including violinist Paweł Zalejski, right) in Panufnik's *Hommage à Chopin*

The trios make up the most interesting part of the recording – robustly made music in which Jacquet de La Guerre shows her fertile melodic imagination and harmonic depth, packing it all in by casting the sonatas in sections linked by transitions rather than as discrete movements à la Corelli. It makes them less predictable and more able to surprise and delight. Her violin sonatas are more conventional but leave space for the continuo gamba to cut loose, and also include some of the earliest examples in French music of violin multiple-stopping.

The London-based Bach Players have been playing Jacquet de La Guerre for a while now – they included a different trio on their 'An Italian in Paris' album (Hyphen Press, 9/14) – and their performances of the trios in particular are stylistically and musically assured, allowing this fine music the seriousness and room to breathe it needs. Some of the sonatas are prefaced by a harpsichord prelude, effectively provided by Silas Wollston. Nicolette Moonen's intonation in the violin sonatas is a little on the edge, it has to be said, but the group's move to a new label has brought rewards in a more focused and happily balanced recording than hitherto. **Lindsay Kemp**

Panufnik

String Quartets – No 1; No 2, 'Messages'; No 3, 'Wycinanki'. *Hommage à Chopin*^a

Apollon Musagète Quartet with

^aDóra Ombódi fl ^aSławomir Rozlach db
Fryderyk Chopin Institute © NIFCCD059
(71' • DDD)



Overshadowed by his symphonies, Panufnik's string quartets have begun to find favour – this disc by the Apollon Musagète Quartet being the fourth to present them as an integral though contrasted sequence. Composed after *Sinfonia di sfera* (his fifth and greatest symphony), the First Quartet (1976) pursues its innate abstraction to an even more graphic yet never cerebral degree. Thus 'Prelude' forcefully presents each of the four instruments in descending order, then 'Transformations' unfolds a dialogue of searching expressiveness that evolves with mounting intensity towards the climactic unison chord, after which 'Postlude' revisits the opening in vigorous though equable terms – suggestive of a resolution having been reached.

Even finer is the Second Quartet (1980) – its *Messages* inspired by childhood memories of hearing telegraph wires resonate in the wind, resulting in a single movement whose seamless interplay of stasis and dynamism makes for Panufnik's most perfectly realised instrumental work. It is in conveying this unity-within-diversity that the present ensemble is impressive, the music emerging inevitably from fugitive beginnings to an even more rapt conclusion. If the Third Quartet (1990) is less ambitious in scope, its five succinct *Wycinanki* ('Papercuts') are a distillation of the composer's cultural heritage and love of (symmetrical) abstraction in music whose formal concreteness and expressive fervour are as one; not least its harnessing of diverse techniques (explained by its origin as a test piece) towards a transfigured ending.

These works are preceded by *Hommage à Chopin* (1949) for flute with accompaniment from quartet and double bass. Dóra Ombódi acquits herself sensitively, even if this elegant music does feel out of context. Interpretatively, the AMQ come between the warmer manner of the Brodsky and incisive attack of the Tippett, whose fearlessness has the

FESTTAGE: OPERA & MUSIC IN BERLIN

11-16 APRIL, 2019

ACE
CULTURAL
TOURS

DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG

RICHARD WAGNER
(1813-1883)

DANIEL BARENBOIM
(MUSICAL DIRECTOR)

WIENER PHILHARMONIKER

DANIEL BARENBOIM
(CONDUCTOR)

WITH MUSIC BY:
SERGEI PROKOFIEV
GUSTAV MAHLER

BETROTHAL IN A MONASTERY

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
(1891-1953)

DANIEL BARENBOIM
(MUSICAL DIRECTOR)

ace@aceculturaltours.co.uk

01223 841055

www.aceculturaltours.co.uk



Chetham's
School of Music

Chetham's International Summer School & Festival for Pianists 2019

Artistic Director: **Murray McLachlan**

Also featuring the 6th Manchester International
Concerto Competition for Young Pianists

Part One: 15-21 August 2019

Part Two: 21-27 August 2019

Artists include:

Katya Apekisheva, Paul Badura-Skoda,
Joseph Banowetz, Philippe Cassard,
Peter Donohoe, Philip Fowke, Peter Frankl,
Leslie Howard, Nikki Iles, Eugen Indjic, Eric Lu,
Leon McCawley, Charles Owen, Dina Parakhina, Martin Roscoe,
Craig Sheppard, Balázs Szokolay, Martino Tirimo

With daily concerts, lectures, improvisation, jazz, composition,
intensive one-to-one coaching, duets, organ and harpsichord

*The
Friendliest
Piano Summer
School in the
World!*

For further information, call +44 (0)1625 266899
or email info@pianosummerschool.com

www.pianosummerschool.com



14th UNISA international PIANO Competition

21 January – 1 February 2020

Pretoria, South Africa

First prize: R220 000

Second prize: R140 000

Closing date: 2 August 2019 Third prize: R90 000

- Age limit: 30 years
- Final round with orchestra.
- Free accommodation with host parents.
- Flights to South Africa sponsored by organisers.

www.unisa.ac.za/musicfoundation

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | 
university of south africa

edge overall. Vividly recorded and well annotated, this release still presents the quartets with manifest conviction.

Richard Whitehouse

String Quartets 1-3 – selected comparisons:

Brodsky Qt (1/15) (CHAN) CHAN10839

Tippett Qt (1/15) (NAXO) 8 573164

Parry

Piano Trios – No 1; No 3. Partita^a

Leonore Piano Trio (Benjamin Nabarro *vn*)

Gemma Rosefield *vc* Tim Horton *pf*

Hyperion © CDA68243 (70' • DDD)



Brahms, Schumann ... it's been too easy, over the long years of its relative neglect, to

reach for obvious comparisons when discussing Parry's chamber music. We've all done it. But listen to the second movement of his First Piano Trio of 1878: piano lightly sketching in its melody, buoyed up by pizzicato cello, while the violin buzzes brilliantly along behind it on needlepoint. Or move on to the *Adagio*, with the violin orating eloquently above a chiming, free-floating piano. The basic idiom is familiar, for sure, but the imaginative conception is distinctive and wholly original. It doesn't, in honesty, sound quite like anything else. In short, it's Parry.

If that fact alone is enough of a recommendation, you'll be purring with satisfaction at this exemplary new release from the Leonore Piano Trio. Enthusiasm isn't always enough to prevent recordings of unfamiliar music from sounding raw but these performances feel fully matured – fresh, intelligent and strikingly stylish; edgy when they need to be and opening out generously when Parry's romantic impulse demands it (as in the second subject of the First Trio's restless opening *Allegro*).

It's certainly never a wallow (Hyperion's clear, naturally balanced recorded sound helps there too). Phrases are taut and melodies are deftly characterised – giving both the grandeur and the dancelike momentum of a passacaglia to the *Lento* slow movement of the more loosely structured Second Trio, a movement that Parry conceived as a lament. As a makeweight, violinist Benjamin Nabarro and pianist Tim Horton give a smiling and equally vivid account of the mock-Baroque Partita; an inventive little delight, in the manner of Grieg's *Holberg Suite*. Excellent booklet notes from Parryist-in-chief Jeremy Dibble, who seems to be on something of a roll. **Richard Bratby**

Piazzolla

'Revolucionario'

La camorra I. Chin chin. Concierto para quinteto.

Fracanapa. Milonga for Three and Finale.

Milonga loca. Lo que vendrá. Retrato de Alfredo

Gobbi. Retrato de Milton. Revolucionario.

Romance del Diablo. Tango para una ciudad

Astor Piazzolla Quintet

E54 Music © PIAZZ001 (66' • DDD)

Piazzolla · Paz

'Celebrating Piazzolla'

Paz Milonga de los monsters 2 Piazzolla

Las cuatro estaciones porteñas (arr Bragato).

El gordo triste. Oblivion. Los pajaros perdidos.

El titere. Yo soy Maria (all arr Paz)

Carla Jablonski *mez* **Neave Trio**

Azica © ACD71324 (48' • DDD)



Astor Piazzolla formed his first quintet in 1960, adding piano, guitar, violin and double bass to his bandoneón. It disbanded by the early 1970s, yet a few years later he put together a new quintet that he worked with into his final years. The Quinteto Astor Piazzolla was formed some 20 years ago at the behest of the composer's daughter, and – not surprisingly – their performances are polished and stylistically solid. Still, naming an ensemble after an artist who was such a force of nature and is not that long gone practically begs for comparisons to be made.

On several selections, the Quinteto Astor Piazzolla do indeed live up to the eponym. In the lyrically alluring *Romance del Diablo*, for instance, they avoid cloying sentimentality by providing rhythmic backbone as well as tenderness, just as Piazzolla did on his 1965 'Concert in New York's Philharmonic Hall' album. And they brood darkly in the *Retrato de Alfredo Gobbi* – a portrait of the venerable tango violinist – in a way that echoes Piazzolla's 1970 recording from the Teatro Regina in Buenos Aires. In general, however, the Quinteto Astor Piazzolla miss that whiff of danger that makes Piazzolla's own performances so riveting. In Piazzolla's hands, *Milonga para tres* (from the terrific 1987 'Rough Dancer and the Cyclical Night' album) conjures a desolate streetscape in the wee hours of the morning; the new recording evokes a brightly lit jazz club. And where the late tanguero barreled breathlessly through *Chin chin* live at Montreux in

1984, leaping perilously from one bar to the next, this new version moves at a steadier pace, favouring swaggering confidence over desperate urgency.

It's not necessary to slavishly imitate Piazzolla in order to do justice to his music, of course. The Neave Trio play José Bragato's arrangement of the well-known *Primavera porteña* (the first of Piazzolla's *Four Seasons*) significantly faster than Piazzolla himself, but how thrilling it is. Indeed, the way they barrel ahead has a wild energy similar to that blistering performance of *Chin chin* from Montreux. *Verano porteño* is similarly electrifying, and I like how in *Otoño porteño* the Neave seem to be trying to project a bigger, more symphonic sound. It's stylistically appropriate too, I think, as I often sense Piazzolla doing just that with his various ensembles.

The songs that make up the remainder of the Neave's programme are slightly less persuasive. Carla Jablonski's handsome mezzo-soprano fits snugly between the violin and cello, and she wisely avoids any hint of the operatic, singing in a light, *parlando* style that sometimes brings Weill to mind, especially in her declamatory version of *Los pájaros perdidos*. But some songs, like *El gordo triste* and *Yo soy Maria*, simply require more bite. The harmonically sophisticated arrangements by Leonardo Suárez Paz (son of Fernando, violinist in Piazzolla's second quintet) are superb, as is his sardonic *Milonga de los monsters* – an unlikely yet happy marriage of Prokofiev and *tango nuevo*.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Shostakovich · Kabalevsky · Prokofiev

Kabalevsky Cello Sonata, Op 71. Rondo in Memory of Prokofiev, Op 79 **Prokofiev** Ballade, Op 15. Adagio, 'Cinderella and the Prince', Op 97 **Shostakovich** Cello Sonata, Op 40. Moderato

Steven Isserlis *vc* **Olli Mustonen** *pf*

Hyperion © CDA68239 (77' • DDD)



'Olli and I find it quite masterly – and addictive', Steven Isserlis writes in

a booklet note on Kabalevsky's Cello Sonata, which he and Olli Mustonen have programmed here alongside more familiar works by Shostakovich and Prokofiev, together with shorter pieces by all three composers. Kabalevsky, of course, divides opinion. He's best known for his adherence to Soviet orthodoxy at a time

when Shostakovich, in particular, was exploring ambiguities of expression in order to examine the darker truths of totalitarianism. His music is frequently described as bland, though the Sonata, written for Rostropovich in 1961, is anything but that.

It's a gaunt work that oscillates between brooding introspection and quite alarming violence before releasing its tensions in a frantic *perpetuum mobile* that eventually attains a tenuous calm. Isserlis and Mustonen make a strong case for it in a performance of grand gestures that proves a real roller coaster ride. Isserlis's intensity and Mustonen's pianistic weight suit the piece wonderfully well, and the tolling opening chords sound at once solemn and threatening as Isserlis traces the sorrowing first subject over them. The first climax has an almost shocking ferocity that seems to haunt the meandering scherzo-cum-waltz that eventually follows, and the finale is both hair-raising in its manic energy and thrilling as a display of technical prowess.

The Shostakovich Sonata, in contrast, seems spacious and ruminative, particularly when placed beside Rostropovich's performances with Britten at Aldeburgh in 1964 (BBC Legends, 12/09) or in 1959 with Shostakovich himself (now on Supraphon, 8/14), though the relaxed speeds adopted in the opening movement allow Isserlis to probe the music's emotional resonances with great subtlety and Mustonen's weight again proves telling in the first movement's development, where the repetitive rhythms sound increasingly baleful. The bleak *Largo* is deeply felt, the finale all caustic wit and irony. Grandness of gesture surfaces again, meanwhile, in Prokofiev's *Ballade*, its drama immeasurably heightened by the panache and warmth that both players bring to it.

The shorter pieces are also superbly done. Isserlis is at his most beguiling in Shostakovich's early *Moderato*, while the *pas de deux* from *Cinderella*, which Prokofiev arranged before the ballet's premiere, has plenty of passion and sweep. Kabalevsky's *Rondo in Memory of Prokofiev*, dating from 1965, is curious, given that there was seemingly no love lost between the two composers. Avoiding direct quotation, Kabalevsky juxtaposes a poised *adagio* that could have come from one of Prokofiev's ballets with passages of frenetic activity and spectral brilliance. Isserlis and Mustonen play it with the

combination of lyricism and drama that characterises the rest of the disc. Very fine.

Tim Ashley

'Blues Dialogues'

'Music by Black Composers'

DN Baker Blues (Deliver My Soul) **CS Brown**

A Song Without Words **B Childs** Incident on

Larpenteur Avenue **Da Costa** A Set of Dance

Tunes **Ellington** In a Sentimental Mood

(arr Wendell Logan) **Perkinson** Blue/s Forms.

Louisiana Blues **Roumain** Filter **WG Still** Suite

Wallen Woogie Boogie **CC White** Levee Dance

D White Blues Dialogues

Rachel Barton Pine *vn* **Matthew Hagle** *pf*

Cedille Ⓢ CDR90000 182 (76' • DDD)



What a fascinating, beautiful disc.

Rachel Barton Pine has borrowed the

name from the four *Blues Dialogues* for unaccompanied violin by Dolores White. Around them, she's drawn on a two-decade fascination with music by black composers to assemble a remarkably varied and rewarding recital linked by the unifying idea of the Blues. And if that idea initially suggests a formula – or (gulp!) crossover – that impression is quickly dispelled.

William Grant Still's Suite evokes Brahmsian romanticism, Dolores White quotes Bartók, and Daniel Bernard Roumain's *Filter* moves from Jimi Hendrix-inspired tonal distortion to a brilliant *moto perpetuo* derived from electronic dance music. Billy Childs's *Incident on Larpenteur Avenue* – commissioned by Pine for this collection – unfolds a story of racial injustice with the same economy of means, and sublimated pain, as Janáček's Piano Sonata. The disc's title is valid: these really are 'dialogues' in the most creative and stimulating sense.

Need it be said that Pine plays everything here gloriously – from the gleaming virtuoso dazzle of David Baker's opening *Blues (Deliver My Soul)* to the full-throated lower-string tone and caressing portamentos that she brings to Clarence Cameron White's 1927 *Levee Dance*. Listen to how unaffectedly she outlines the melody of Still's central slow movement; enjoy the thunder with which pianist Matthew Hagle launches Wendell Logan's Duke Ellington transcription, and the Aeolian-harp tones with which Pine finally makes that glorious melody dissolve. In passages of virtuoso display, she's as sure-footed and as agile as an acrobat.

You might be sceptical about the capacity of instrumental music to convey a socio-political message, and that's your prerogative (though the booklet notes are excellent, and very comprehensive). This is a deeply rewarding disc regardless. **Richard Bratby**

'He(a)r'

Guðnadóttir Point of Departure **Sigfúsdóttir**

Loom. Spirals **Stefánsdóttir** He(a)r **Tally**

Warm life at the foot of the iceberg

Thorvaldsdóttir Impressions. Reflections

Nordic Affect

Sono Luminus Ⓢ (CD +  DSL92224

(60' • DDD)



Nordic Affect are a pioneering group of Icelandic women period-performance

musicians with a keen interest in women composers, contemporary and electro-acoustic music. Their instrumental core is flute, string trio plus harpsichord (traverso player Georgia Browne does not feature), each player doubling as a vocalist. The instrumental works are interspersed within the titular electro-acoustic *He(a)r*, by group member and producer Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir.

Impressions (2015) and *Reflections* (2016) by Anna Thorvaldsdóttir (b1977) are challenging listens, though are directly communicable, particularly the harpsichord-dominated *Impressions* in which Cowell-like playing techniques feature prominently. In *Warm life at the foot of the iceberg* (2014, for cello and piano but recast for Nordic Affect), Mirjam Tally (b1976, the only non-Icelander here) likewise creates a vivid tone picture of the interaction of glacial ice with solid rock.

Maria Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir (b1980) is a violinist as well as a composer and this is audible in the fluency of both of her works. There are many arid new music works named *Spirals* but Sigfúsdóttir's is not one of them, the composer directing the course of her vibrant music as the music, not the geometry, dictates. The same applies to *Loom*, performable either as a concert piece as here or with a video component. In *Point of Departure*, Hildur Guðnadóttir (b1982), a cellist, wrote a quartet for the four musicians to play 'as one instrument. One voice'.

The performances sound extremely well executed, the electro-acoustic element applied with discretion.



Superbly assured: Jennifer Pike is joined by Petr Limonov in an exquisite Polish recital

Stefánsdóttir's *He(a)r* binds the whole together into a concept album more familiar from progressive rock music. That may not appeal to everyone, but the individual pieces can be appreciated in their own right. Sono Luminus's sound is superb, close and clear as if the musicians were in the room with you.

Guy Rickards

'The Polish Violin'

Karłowicz Impromptu **Moszkowski** Guitarre, Op 45 No 2 (arr Sarasate) **Szymanowski** Chant de Roxane. *Mythes*, Op 30. Nocturne and Tarantella, Op 28. Romance, Op 23 **Wieniawski** Légende, Op 17. Polonaise de concert, Op 4

Jennifer Pike *vn* Petr Limonov *pf*
Chandos © CHAN20082 (75' • DDD)



This is – in the best possible sense – a high-calorie recital,

and I wonder if the way it's presented here is the best way to enjoy it. With the possible exception of Wieniawski's *Légende*, Szymanowski's *Mythes* is the best-known work here, and certainly the one with the most powerful personality. It's also the longest, so the overall effect of listening to this programme is of a climax followed by a series of encores.

But still, what a climax! Jennifer Pike approaches the *Mythes* with a tone of glistening, succulent sweetness, coupled to generous vibrato, swooping, sensuous phrasing and intense, often dazzling radiance. Her intonation, even in harmonics and double-stops, is superbly assured; and though pianist Petr Limonov is perhaps a little too far back in the sonic picture to really merge with Pike's sound as the narrative of 'La fontaine d'Aréthuse' demands, the pair generate a compelling atmosphere.

Then it's on to the *Nocturne and Tarantella*: by turns smouldering

and positively incendiary. With virtuoso playing of ferocious bravura, it almost felt like a fourth *Mythe*. But while the mood of these four extraordinary pieces carried over into a brooding account of the *Légende* and a *Polonaise de concert* that had grandeur as well as swagger, I did wonder if the languor of the *Mythes* had sapped some of the playfulness from Sarasate's delicious arrangement of Moszkowski's *Guitarre*, and the lightness from Karłowicz's lollipop of an Impromptu. And might it all have worked just that bit better if the programme had ended with one of the big Szymanowski pieces? Or is this just fault-finding for the sake of saying something more than that this is a simply ravishing disc, thrillingly played?

Richard Bratby

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

Grigory Ginzburg

He may be less well known than the likes of Horowitz and Arrau, but Grigory Ginzburg was truly one of the most outstanding pianists of his generation, says **Jeremy Nicholas**

Talking to a celebrated American pianist a while back, we were exchanging views on our favourite pianists. I mentioned the name of Grigory Ginzburg. His reaction changed. ‘Oh my goodness,’ he said in an almost reverential tone. ‘Oh. My. Goodness.’ From pianists and piano cognoscenti, among whom Ginzburg is almost universally admired, this is not an uncommon reaction. Yet in the West his name is virtually unknown to the general public. The main reasons for this are that after 1936 he was forbidden to travel abroad by the Soviet regime; and he had the misfortune to die relatively young at the age of 57.

With no career in the West and no readily available recordings, he is rarely mentioned in the same breath as other great pianists of his generation (Solomon, Arrau, Serkin and Horowitz were all born within two years of Ginzburg). How, then, does he qualify to join their ranks? The answer can be heard in his recordings. It is as simple as that. Listen to any Ginzburg track, any movement from any work of the many composers he espoused, and you will be in no doubt that you are listening to one of the greatest pianists of the last century.

Born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1904, Ginzburg was a prodigy who was having lessons at the age of four from Sofia Barabeichik, sister of the conductor Issay Dobrowen.

At six he was in Moscow studying with the wife of Alexander Goldenweiser. When Ginzburg’s father died suddenly, Goldenweiser, who was to become one of the most influential teachers of the Soviet era, immediately took on the role of surrogate father. It was in this cultured environment and loving home that Ginzburg grew up, one visited regularly by many of the great musicians of the day, including Rachmaninov, Medtner and Scriabin. He began studies with Goldenweiser himself in 1916 when he entered the

Moscow Conservatoire, making his debut at 12 in Liszt’s E flat Concerto while still a student. He graduated with the Gold Medal in 1924, the same year in which he gave his first solo Moscow recital.

Ginzburg is heard at his best on the two volumes of his recordings issued by APR (see below). Here you will encounter a superior virtuoso technique always used musically. The nonchalant ease with which technical challenges are met will put a smile on your face. On APR5672 (7/10) there is Weber’s

rondo *La gaité*, a delicious soufflé lightly pedalled (as is the Strauss-Schulz-Evler *Blue Danube*) and some Chopin of striking and convincing individuality. Perhaps it was this that left him in fourth place at the inaugural (1927) International Chopin Competition in Warsaw won by the less distinctive Lev

Oborin. Ginzburg’s recording of the Op 25 Etudes (issued on Arlecchino with his complete Chopin recordings, 6/97) brings that same distinctive voice to Chopin. Some pianists maintain that they are without equal.

Volume 37 of Philips’s Great Pianists of the 20th Century (A/99) showcased opera transcriptions (including a must-have Tchaikovsky-Pabst *Eugen Onegin* paraphrase), Tchaikovsky’s *Grande Sonate* (‘each note belongs to me,’ said Ginzburg) and works by Prokofiev, Medtner and Myaskovsky. Mozart,

Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann also feature in his discography as do Rubinstein’s Fourth Concerto and Kabalevsky’s Second Piano Concerto, the latter yet to find its way on to CD. Most significant of all, perhaps, are the recordings with his surrogate father of both Suites for Two Pianos and the *Six Morceaux* for piano four hands by Rachmaninov. Goldenweiser, who often played duets with the composer, was the dedicatee of the Op 17 Suite. The last movement

Listen to any movement from any work of the many composers he espoused and you will be in no doubt that you are listening to one of the greatest pianists of the last century

DEFINING MOMENTS

•1916 – *An early influence*

Begins studies with Alexander Goldenweiser

•1921 – *Jobbing pianist*

Starts work as a pianist for the Proletarian Cultural and Educational Organisation

•1929 – *Pupil becomes teacher*

Joins the staff of the Moscow Conservatory

•1936 – *Foreign tours*

Plays in Poland, Baltic States and Switzerland before being banned from foreign tours

•1949 – *Russian honour*

Appointed Honoured Artist of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and awarded State Prize of the USSR


•1956 – *Freedom to travel*

Permitted to play abroad once again

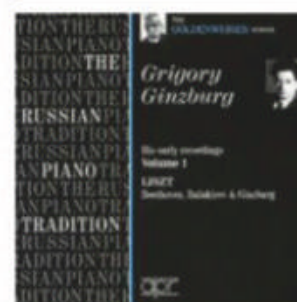


is especially notable for the contrast to the fiery speed to which we are now accustomed from, among others, Martha Argerich and her various partners.

For final confirmation of Ginzburg's place in the pantheon, there is film on YouTube of him playing Liszt's *La campanella*. What dextrous grace, what barely credible repeated notes in the central section, what economy of means! His power and delicate finesse married to such flair and innate musicality make a rare combination.

Having been on the staff of the Moscow Conservatory since 1929, in 1956 Ginzburg decided to teach less and play more. He was once more permitted to play outside the USSR. Tragically he suffered a series of heart attacks and, though able to tour Yugoslavia in 1961, by then he was suffering from cancer. He died in Moscow on December 5 that year, nine days after Goldenweiser, who had been born a generation earlier in 1875. 

ESSENTIAL LISTENING



Ginzburg: His Early Recordings, Vol 1

APR

These solo recordings are mainly devoted to Liszt whose music Ginzburg championed for his entire career. Even in the most

superficial works he makes every note count despite the impossible demands. The three Paganini Etudes are elegantly despatched, as are the Liszt-Busoni Fantasia on themes from The Marriage of Figaro and his own rollicking transcription of 'Largo al factotum' from Rossini's The Barber of Seville.

Instrumental



David Fanning hears late Liszt piano works from Cédric Tiberghien:

'Liszt's frequent excursions into basso profundo territory sound like a supercharged atonal male-voice choir in a cathedral' ► [REVIEW ON PAGE 66](#)



Harriet Smith enjoys Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's compelling Schumann:

'The Third Sonata can sound so extreme that it becomes bitty, but Bavouzet gives it a sweep that is absolutely engaging' ► [REVIEW ON PAGE 68](#)

JS Bach

Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas, BWV1001-1006

Giuliano Carmignola *vn*

DG ④ 483 5050GH2 (148' • DDD)



Were I to append a subtitle to this memorable album it would be 'the art of the bow', the reason being that although DG's recording comprehensively reports the tonal beauty of the 1733 Guarneri violin, it's Giuliano Carmignola's agile use of Emilio Slaviero's 2007 bow (after an 18th-century model by Tourte) that really grabbed my attention. By that I mean pressure, types of arpeggio and articulation, and most especially dynamics, sometimes reducing his tone to the merest whisper.

The very first track on disc 1 immediately proves the point, the *Adagio* from the G minor Sonata, a gentle chord, initially rising before falling on an elegant trill, and proceeding through a performance that is flexible in the extreme. Turn then to Alina Ibragimova (a player who again stresses the importance of the bow) in the same passage and purity allied to a marginally less flexible manner of phrasing reminds us of what we're listening to, namely a 'period savvy' approach to Bach. With Carmignola the period-modern divide vanishes; he employs the subtlest of ornaments (often used in partita repeats), inconspicuous curlicues that adorn the line without impediment. He'll also alter the tempo for a point that demands special attention, for instance slowing from 1'37" into the G minor Fugue before cueing the lightest and liveliest of arpeggios. And where figurations are repeated, either ascending or descending (specifically in the sonata fugues), you sense how the rhetoric is working.

Carmignola's imaginative articulation is tellingly illustrated in movements from the Second and Third Sonatas, the fugue of the former where purposeful attack and a well-oiled legato operate simultaneously, the

Largo of the latter, so utterly quiet and where chords are barely brushed. The Chaconne from the D minor Partita emerges as a dignified processional, the tempo kept steady; the use of tonal colour is acute enough to compensate for an absence of expressive vibrato. Again varieties of articulation and dynamic are significant, and how refreshing to hear the closing bars played with restraint rather than aping a 'grand finale'. Carmignola's mastery of tonal colouring brings a burst of sunlight to the opening of the E major Partita's Loure and the dance movements are dispatched with panache, the sort we're used to from Carmignola's performances with orchestra. The recorded sound is beautiful aside from the very occasional off-mic groan or 'knock' – very distant, but if I don't mention it someone else will.

This for me is a definite first choice among period-instrument recordings of these works, in spite of strong competition from, in particular, Rachel Podger. DG here maintains the gold standard that it has already established with Nathan Milstein, Henryk Szeryng and more recently Hilary Hahn, very different of course: they represent, in their different ways, the much-vaunted 'old guard'. One also mustn't forget the excellent Ibragimova and Ning Feng; but how inspiring to at last have access to a period recording of Bach's solo violin works that is on the same exalted interpretative level as the masters of yore. **Rob Cowan**

Selected comparisons:

Podger (7/99^R, 12/99^R) (CHCL) CCSSEL2498

Ibragimova (11/09) (HYPE) CDA67691/2

Feng (3/18) (CHCL) CCS39018

Berlioz

Symphonie fantastique, Op 14 (arr Heisser)

Jean-François Heisser, Marie-Josèphe Jude *pfs*

Harmonia Mundi ④ HMM90 2503 (52' • DDD)



The pianists write in their booklet accompanying this release that Jean-

François Heisser made this transcription over 30 years ago. It is not so very different to two made in the 19th century by Otto Singer and Charles Bannelier, the kind of accomplished, faithful but otherwise unremarkable in-house arrangements issued of many great orchestral works. These are a very different prospect to Liszt's transcription for solo piano. The ingenuity, the recreative force at play, to say nothing of the challenge meted out to the pianist, are of another order.

If a major *raison d'être* of these two-piano arrangements (ie to bring the work to an audience that would otherwise have no opportunity of hearing it) is no longer valid, they can, whether for two hands, four hands, one piano or two, often illuminate the orchestral writing. A further point of interest about this release is that Heisser and Marie-Josèphe Jude have chosen to play the arrangement on the Pleyel vis-à-vis piano of 1928 from the collection of the Musée de la Musique at the Philharmonie de Paris.

All of the above is a lengthy preamble to my reasons for finding this recording, I am sorry to say, uncomfortable to hear and unsatisfactory in its execution. Rather than offering 'a more analytical vision [favouring] the osmosis of an overall sonority produced by a soundboard shared between the two instruments' (booklet), the Pleyel clouds the vision, and sounds to me as though it has a heavy action that makes it a challenge to play. You are, in effect, listening to the *Symphonie fantastique* played on a pair of baby grands.

After the first two movements of dutiful playing, indistinct voicing, limited dynamics and sometimes wayward ensemble, I had a break and listened to the same two movements in Liszt's solo arrangement played by Idil Biret (Naxos), a recording I have long admired: balm to the ears, clarity of text, enchanting in 'Un bal' and delivered with a natural fluency and ease that escape the French duo. These differences are even more pronounced in the 'March to the Scaffold' and the 'Witches' Sabbath' when you hear



Finesse and subtlety: Cédric Tiberghien plays Liszt's third book of *Années de pèlerinage* and other late works – see review on page 66

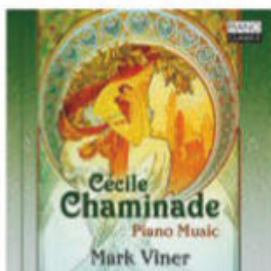
François-René Duchable in his revised version of Liszt's arrangement (EMI, 1/81), reflecting Berlioz's scary, unpredictable and, ultimately, thrilling original. For all their earnest endeavour and good intentions, sadly, the French duo are unable to convey these essential elements to the same degree. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Chaminade

Arabesque, Op 61. Six Études de concert, Op 35. La lisonjera, Op 50. Pierrette, Op 41. Poème provençal, Op 127. Six Romances sans paroles, Op 76. Les Sylvains, Op 60

Mark Viner *pf*

Piano Classics © PCL10164 (74' • DDD)



Contrary to what you might think, there have been several CDs devoted entirely to the piano music of Cécile Chaminade. Not the least of these is one of all the (G&T) discs and (Duo-Art) piano rolls she herself made of her music between 1901 and 1927, issued on the Pierian Recording Society label. Joanne Polk (Steinway & Sons) and Johann Blanchard (MDG, 7/15) are just two of the most recent. This new survey,

sharing some repertoire with each, must count among the finest yet, showing the range and ambition of Chaminade in short works, played with an innate charm and understanding of the genre. In addition, it is most beautifully recorded (Pieter van Winkel and Peter Arts in Westvest Church, Schiedam, Netherlands) with an informative, well-written 10-page booklet by the pianist.

Three of Chaminade's perennial favourites are included: *Pierrette, air de ballet* (one of the items Chaminade recorded in 1901 and wittily dispatched by Viner), *La lisonjera* ('The Flatterer', in a properly sly, insinuating reading) and 'Automne' (once found in every piano stool in the land, despite its five flats) placed here with its seldom-heard companions as the second of the *Six Études de concert*. The last of these, 'Tarantelle', is a test of agility and stamina for any pianist. Not every single one of the four *Poème provençal* and *Six Romances sans paroles* will have equal appeal, but even those who sniff at Chaminade and others like her, forever condemned to sit below the salt on account of being labelled 'a salon music composer', will find it hard not to fall for the elegance and melodic appeal of, say, 'Élévation' and 'Méditation' (Nos 2 and 6 from the latter set).

Mark Viner's earlier single-composer recordings of Thalberg, Liszt and Alkan have earned him high praise. Ploughing your own furrow, eschewing the competition route and avoiding the staple repertoire of your peers (though you have most of it in your fingers) undoubtedly makes the path to international recognition more difficult. Someday, in the not too distant future, someone will sit up and take note of what an exceptional talent we have in our midst. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Chopin

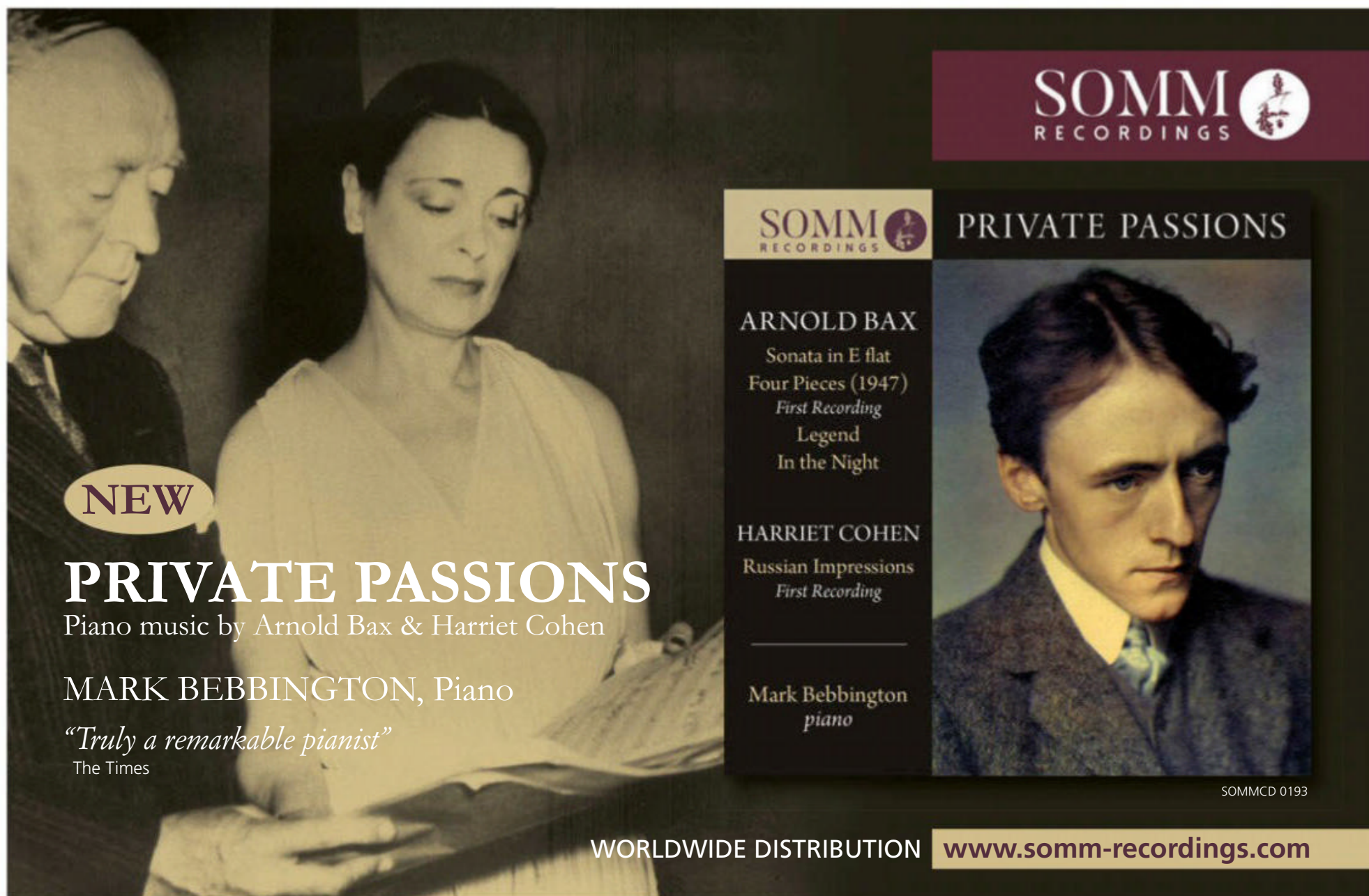
Two Nocturnes, Op 55. Three Mazurkas, Op 56. Berceuse, Op 57. Piano Sonata No 3, Op 58

Maurizio Pollini *pf*

DG © 483 6475GH (54' • DDD)



During the past two seasons, Pollini has toured with programmes that devoted ample space to Chopin. His victory at the age of 18 in the 1960 Warsaw Competition has made Pollini's Chopin a benchmark, despite the subsequent broadening of his repertoire. His latest DG release consists entirely of



SOMM RECORDINGS

PRIVATE PASSIONS

NEW

PRIVATE PASSIONS
Piano music by Arnold Bax & Harriet Cohen

MARK BEBBINGTON, Piano

"Truly a remarkable pianist"
The Times

ARNOLD BAX
Sonata in E flat
Four Pieces (1947)
First Recording
Legend
In the Night

HARRIET COHEN
Russian Impressions
First Recording

Mark Bebbington
piano

SOMMCD 0193

WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION www.somm-recordings.com

HAUTE ÉCOLE DE MUSIQUE
DE GENÈVE

Applications for 2019-2020
are now available!

Application deadline: 1st March 2019

hem

Haute école de musique
Genève - Neuchâtel

WWW.HEMGE.CH



Hes·SO GENÈVE
Haute Ecole Spécialisée
de Suisse occidentale

works by the Polish master, composed between 1842 and 1844.

Pollini turned 77 this January and, while it is tempting to draw comparisons with pianists such as Backhaus, Rubinstein, Horowitz and Richter who continued playing well into maturity, it is a temptation I shall try to resist. Pollini's own variegated pianistic legacy provides more than ample bases for comparison.

Artistically speaking, Pollini has always tended toward the Apollonian, and his intellectual rigour is fully evident in this recording, not least in its choice of a highly specific, circumscribed period of Chopin's oeuvre. Granitic surfaces, bluntly emphasised harmonies and a preoccupation with polyphony are the chief characteristics of these interpretations. Meanwhile, rhythmic nuance, sensuous textures, singing line and the finer contrasts of touch and dynamic play less than subsidiary roles. In this sense, Pollini's new recording might be considered a culmination of some aspects of his historically anti-sentimentalist Chopin, with its shapely formal structures and, for all its former exuberance, a certain aristocratic reserve.

At the same time, this new recording seems to signal something of a sea change, a departure which, if rooted in the past, feels radical nevertheless. In the F minor Nocturne of Op 55, delicate melancholy is replaced by a demeanour of mistrust which mutates into rather gruff, inscrutable determination. Its companion piece, the beautiful E flat major Nocturne, scrupulously maintains the upper voices, though they often sound disputatious rather than intertwining in sympathetic accord. A pellucid Berceuse contains just about all the requisite ingredients except tenderness. The first Mazurka of Op 56 becomes a little dull for want of contrasts and the second lacks the rambunctious bounce of a true *vivace*, while the unfolding tragedy of the third in C minor strikes as curiously desultory, with little that speaks of genuine pathos, and an affectively non-committal ending.

It is the great B minor Sonata, however, that provides most food for thought. The sense of force of will brought to bear on unruly material is disquietingly pervasive, with opening measures that evoke a gauntlet cast down in anger. There are instances in both the Scherzo and finale where rhythmical instability in the left hand threatens to short-circuit Pollini's vaunted technical reserves. Most disheartening perhaps are those moments when impatience seems to surface in the musical discourse.

This is not Chopin for everyone. Its sternly ascetic qualities abjure any conventional idea of beauty holding sway in contemporary Chopin performance. Those seeking poetry, sensuous contour or variety of affect should look elsewhere. Yet Pollini remains ever the master pianist, a cultivated musician of varied tastes, wide experience and provocative intellect. These qualities alone command our attention.

Patrick Rucker

Debussy

Préludes – Book 1; Book 2^a

Vladimir Ashkenazy *pf*

Paladino © PMR0100 (69' • DDD)

^aRecorded live at Hunter College, New York, November 20, 1971



A new recording by Ashkenazy as pianist is always newsworthy; but the real (re-)

discovery here is his account of the second book of Debussy's *Préludes* from a live recording in 1971, never previously issued. In the official trailer Ashkenazy says that someone just made the recording without his knowledge and that he didn't even know about it. The booklet notes offer no insight into the source, though strangely enough an excerpt was uploaded to YouTube in 2014.

Sleuthing aside, and regardless of the echoey acoustic, there is much to enjoy here in Ashkenazy's tone-colours and blend of agility with poetic sound-scaping. The opening 'Brouillards' is a tableau of flickering lights splashed on a perfectly misty background, while 'La puerta del vino' offers a sensual combination of the stillness and weight of the Spanish heat with the pulsations of the habanera. 'Ondine' is aquatic and shimmering, though perhaps not allowing sufficient intake of breath before diving in. Ashkenazy's 'Feux d'artifice' clocks in a whole minute faster than Zimmerman's; dazzling as this is, there is something of the étude about it, while the final Marseillaise allusion is hardly 'de très loin'. In general, the final *Préludes* lack the imagination and sophistication of, for instance, Yuri Egorov. Hear the sense of pompousness Egorov evokes in 'Hommage à S Pickwick' or the narrative quality of Zimmerman's 'Canope'.

But this disc is a tale of two ages. Alongside the historic recording of Book 2 there is Ashkenazy's account of Book 1, recorded in 2017 at the age of 80. It is hardly surprising to find little trace of the

élan and panache he commanded 46 years beforehand. But there is disappointingly little to compensate. Laboured literalness and a lack of atmosphere and clarity are the main impressions. Setting aside Zimmerman's high-definition technicolour account, which is certainly outstanding in its way, there is far more wit, subtlety and spontaneity in Thibaudet's or Bavouzet's interpretations, and a whole universe more sensitivity and artistry in Egorov's. Take, for instance, Egorov's 'Les pas sur la neige' and its chilling, almost harrowing atmosphere. Ashkenazy's 'Cathédrale engloutie' never really manages to haul itself above water, the wind of 'Le vent dans la plaine' becomes a mere sandstorm and 'Puck' sounds too bored to be capricious.

Ashkenazy had apparently never previously recorded or even performed the first book of *Préludes*. One has to question the wisdom of his doing so now. **Michelle Assay**

Selected comparisons:

Egorov (10/84[®]) (WARN) 206531-2

Zimmerman (3/94) (DG) 435 443-2GH2

Thibaudet (8/96) (DECC) 452 022-2DH2

Bavouzet (7/07) (CHAN) CHAN1041 or CHAN10743

Debussy • Ravel

Debussy Études Ravel Gaspard de la nuit

Joseph Moog *pf*

Onyx © ONYX4204 (65' • DDD)



The aesthetic and technical demands of Debussy's *Études* and Ravel's *Gaspard*

de la nuit represent a badge of honour, even a kind of intellectual caché among more and more young pianists. Joseph Moog's remarkable keyboard prowess and great gift for colouristic refinement certainly lend themselves to this repertoire, notwithstanding strong catalogue competition.

Moog brings staggering poise and control to the first Debussy étude's rapid *leggero* passagework, although one can argue that the basic tempo is too fast for the music's sudden mood changes to register. He coaxes out rather than underlines No 2's countermelodies and keeps the right-hand double thirds suave and steady: quite different from Roger Muraro's expansive and sexy interpretation (Harmonia Mundi, 1/19). For all of Moog's beautifully modulated pianism in No 3, I find Mitsuko Uchida far more attentive to differentiating soft dynamics (Philips, 7/90). Moog begins No 4 rather placidly,

while driving the *stringere* staccato double sixths a little too hard – overcompensating, perhaps? By contrast, No 5's central passage in alternating octaves and single notes has rarely sounded so insouciantly even. Nor have No 6's finger-flying runs, although, again, Uchida makes more of Debussy's carefully deployed dynamic hairpins. No 7 could have been lighter and softer: by not sustaining the third- and second-to-last bars, Moog misses the intended humour behind that dry staccato final dyad.

Moog brilliantly conveys No 8's mercurial character, despite his sidestepping some of the composer's hair-trigger tempo modifications. No 9's repeated notes gain more from Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's sharply delineated accents and surging crescendos (Chandos, 12/08) than in Moog's more generalised approach. Moog's workaday No 10 finally comes to life with a gorgeously timed *Lento* transition before the piece's last 13 bars. No 11 ignites Moog's imagination and propensity for uncovering details but No 12's inner rhythms and dynamic contrasts fall flat.

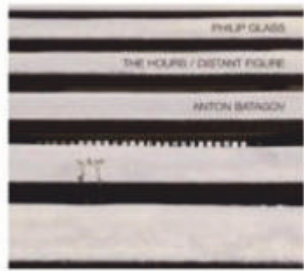
Moog imbues Ravel's 'Ondine' with marvellous textural control throughout, even when playing full-out at the climax. One could wish for 'Le gibet' to shimmer more resonantly but Moog unfolds the billowy chords and tolling B flats in three-dimensional perspective. 'Scarbo' is the prize here: Moog's effortless mastery may not tap into the dark or demonic currents served up by Ivo Pogorelich (DG, 6/83) or Benjamin Grosvenor (Decca, 10/11), yet his nimble, playful and scintillating reading is on the highest level. So is Onyx's engineering. **Jed Distler**

Glass

The Hours (arr Riesman/Muhly). Distant Figure

Anton Batagov *pf*

Orange Mountain © OMM0134 (65' • DDD)



The success of Philip Glass's music to Stephen Daldrey's 2002 film *The Hours*

has spawned several recordings of the piano suite based on the eponymous soundtrack. One could literally spend hours listening to them all. They range from the more objective, 'minimalist' approach of Glass Ensemble stalwart Michael Riesman on the original recording (Orange Mountain, 2004), foregrounding rhythmic precision and dynamic control, to highly expressive, freer and more idiosyncratic interpretations by pianists such as Jeremy Limb (Quartz,

3/14), Valentina Lisitsa (Decca, 6/15) and Nicolas Horvath (Grand Piano, 2016). The Russian pianist Anton Batagov manages to strike an effective balance between the two on this recording, which also features Glass's most recent composition for solo piano, the passacaglia-like *Distant Figure* (2017).

In the hands of performers less attuned to the needs of Glass's film score, the swaying three-against-two (or six-against-four) motion between the two hands in 'The Poet Acts' from *The Hours* often becomes clunky and mannered. However, Batagov's subtle rhythmic inflections serve to mirror the music's inner drama and tension. This also enables the pianist to set up powerful and dramatic contrasts later on, and it is this ability to shape the music's dynamic and expressive curve that marks out Batagov's playing, as heard in more block-like, multi-sectional movements such as 'Tearing Herself Away' and 'The Hours'. Both of these state and develop thematic ideas across larger timespans. The latter, in a version that is 'reorchestrated' by the pianist, provides the soundtrack with an almost Lisztian denouement – a dramatic cry for help made to sound even more powerful for having been largely suppressed up until that point.

Pwyll ap Siôn

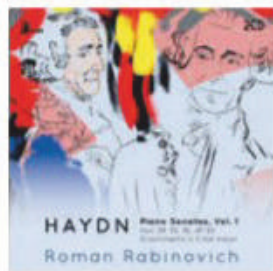
Haydn

Piano Sonatas, HobXVI – No 16;

No 21; No 32, No 39; No 44; No 45

Roman Rabinovich *pf*

First Hand © ② FHR71 (101' • DDD)



Roman Rabinovich was born in 1985 in Tashkent and studied in Israel and at the Juilliard School. He has given acclaimed Haydn performances in the UK and America, including a complete sonata cycle in Bath. Such experience shows, as he launches what promises to be a survey of all the sonatas for First Hand Records.

It's an auspicious start. Rabinovich responds to this ever-inventive music with a broad palette of tone and touch, sweetly singing in the *cantabile* slow movements and with fluent dexterity in the fingery fast movements. There's wit, too, in finales and a wide range of dynamics drawn from his Steinway Model D, sensitively recorded at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York.

The fly in the ointment is the competition. If you wish to follow a recorded Haydn sonata cycle from scratch,

you certainly won't be disappointed by Rabinovich and it would be worthwhile to collect his discs as they appear. Longer-standing Haydnistas, though, will already own recent selections by the likes of Marc-André Hamelin (Hyperion) or Leif Ove Andsnes (EMI/Warner), and the seven volumes that have so far appeared of Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's highly regarded complete overview. Comparing, as an example, the B minor Sonata, No 32, with which Rabinovich's two-disc set concludes, one finds a greater sense of *Sturm und Drang* danger in the performances by the more established pianists. Hamelin, especially, mesmerises in the whirling finale. Bavouzet, too, engages with this music on so many levels – musicologically as well as interpretatively – in a way that is unique to himself and, I suspect, impossible to imitate. Nevertheless, the newcomer is a disc of individual charms and insights, and the development of the cycle as it unfolds will, without doubt, be well worth further listening.

David Threasher

Liszt

Années de pèlerinage – année 3, S163.

Bagatelle sans tonalité, S216a. En rêve, S207.

La lugubre gondola II, S200/2. Mephisto Waltz

No 4, S216b. Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort,

S203i. Wiegenlied, S198

Cédric Tiberghien *pf*

Hyperion © CDA68202 (80' • DDD)



The third 'year' of Liszt's *Années de pèlerinage* is something of a connoisseur's

collection, containing as it does only one concert favourite – 'Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este' – and otherwise featuring the stoical mood-pictures typical of his post-Holy Orders music. Cédric Tiberghien avoids all temptations to overlay these pieces with gratuitous flamboyance, concentrating instead on the finesse and subtle interiority they demand.

He has chosen a Yamaha for the purpose, and the booklet contains his thanks to the company for 'providing one of the finest instruments I have ever played'. The sound is certainly appealing, and Liszt's frequent excursions into *basso profundo* territory in particular gain an impressive rumbling quality, like some supercharged atonal male-voice choir in a cathedral. The extreme high treble is thin and tickly, but no more so than on Liszt's own restored 1870s Chickering (hear Dag Achatz's more volatile renditions of

'Les jeux d'eaux', *En rêve* and *La lugubre gondola* – BIS, 10/84).

In late pieces that fill the disc, nocturnal evocations are to the fore, plus a dose of the proto-modernist experimentalism that has given them a more secure place in the academic canon than in the concert hall. Tiberghien is once again consummately subtle, and he misses no opportunity for virtuoso display where the opportunity arises – as in the *Bagatelle sans tonalité* (though hear Nelson Goerner on Cascaville for even more pianistic wizardry) and the fourth *Mephisto Waltz*. Generously filled and beautifully recorded, this disc offers a fine entry point for anyone either dipping into late Liszt for the first time or giving it another try. **David Fanning**

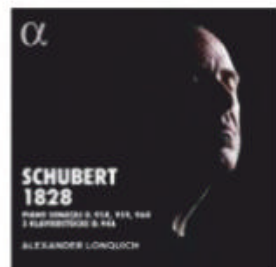
Schubert

'Schubert 1828'

Piano Sonatas – No 19, D958; No 20, D959; No 21, D960. Klavierstücke, D946

Alexander Lonquich *pf*

Alpha ② ALPHA433 (151' • DDD)



It seems everything needs a theme these days, so here we have from Alexander

Lonquich Schubert's last piano works in a set called 'Schubert 1828'. The pianist's notes continue this notion with headings such as 'Sonata in A major, D959: towards a vernal finale'. All of which is well and good but the million-dollar question is whether the playing stands out.

The Three Pieces, D946, are raw, urgent – qualities that are emphasised by Lonquich's fingery style of performing, which gives an unusual clarity to the textures. He's very good at withdrawing his sound to a whisper too. In the frenetically unstable third piece I do find Paul Lewis more effective, though, combining the vision of Brendel with a colour palette all his own.

The sonatas are more of a mixed bag. In the opening movement of D958 I found myself slightly distracted by the agogic distortions (small but pervasive) of the second theme. There's no doubting the thought that has gone into Lonquich's interpretation but sometimes that seems to stand in the way of the progress of the drama. The second movement is well shaped, though his accentuation can obtrude somewhat – Lewis gets this just right and Lupu, daringly slow, finds a hymnic depth to the music. The Scherzo in this new recording is a little on the slow side for my taste and the

finale, too, is tame compared to Uchida and Lewis.

D960 fares better – with a good, steady tread underpinning the first movement, even if Lonquich rather overplays the ominous deep trill from the off (Pires, with haloed sound, is irresistible here). He very much makes the *Andante sostenuto* his own, the main theme initially sounding as if all emotion has been spent, yet gradually warming the tonal colouring. If the accentuation is somewhat unsubtle in the Scherzo's Trio, the movement's sense of desperation is vividly etched. Lonquich is alive to the constantly shifting moods of the finale, too.

The A major Sonata, D959, left me more unsatisfied: the opening is given with a freedom that obscures its Classical sense of line – just a few moments with Lewis and you get a much better idea of how the movement unfolds. Similarly, the *Andantino* is flecked with desynchronisations of the hands and accentuation that is unsubtly applied. The famous passage where Schubert appears to be depicting a complete emotional collapse has an improvisatory feel but doesn't come close to the potency of Uchida. And in the Scherzo again we have slight agogic distortions that distract, while the finale is dogged by some slightly odd phrasing. **Harriet Smith**

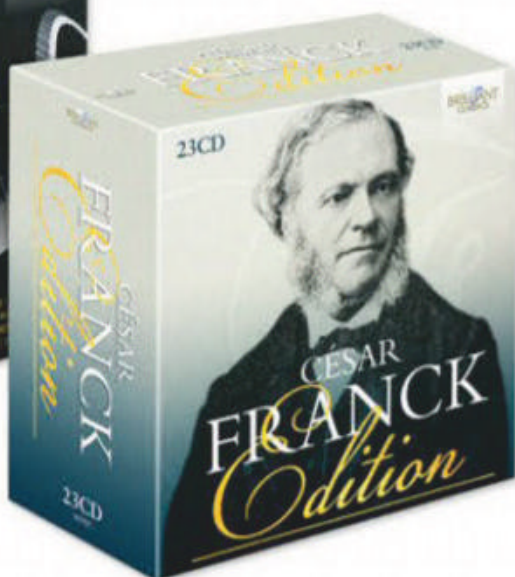
BRILLIANT CLASSICS

Just some of the new and superb releases for 2019!



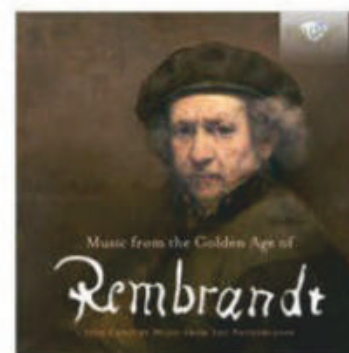
Virtuoso Piano Etudes

22 CD-Box
95571BR

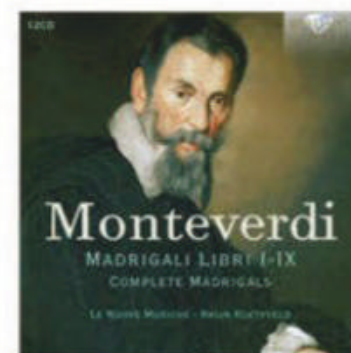


César Franck Edition

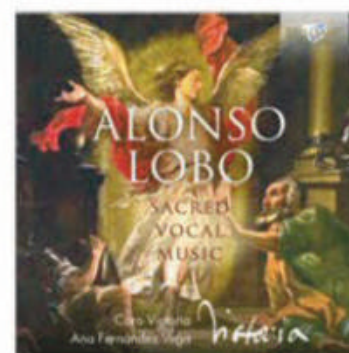
23 CD-Box
95793BR



Music from the Golden Age of
Rembrandt
2CD 95917BR



Monteverdi
12CD 95661BR



Alonso Lobo
1CD 95789BR



Pachelbel
13CD 95623BR



www.rskentertainment.co.uk



www.europadisc.co.uk



www.mdt.co.uk



www.prestoclassical.co.uk



www.brilliantclassics.com

Klavierstücke – selected comparisons:

Brendel (5/94) (PHIL) 438 703-2PM2

Lewis (12/12) (HARM) HMC90 2115/16

Piano Sonatas – selected comparisons:

Uchida (9/98^R) (PHIL) 475 6282PB8

Lupu (3/06) (DECC) 475 7074DC4

Lewis (7/14) (HARM) HMC90 2165/6

Piano Sonata No 21 – selected comparison:

Pires (5/13) (DG) 477 8107GH

Schumann

Piano Sonata No 3, Op 14. Drei Fantasiestücke, Op 111. Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op 26. Gesänge der Frühe, Op 133

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet *pf*

Chandos © CHAN20081 (71' • DDD)



For his first-ever Schumann recital, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet has put together an

intriguing programme, one in which he by no means follows obvious routes or makes life easy for himself. He begins with the Op 14 Sonata, the so-called *Concert sans orchestre*, which begins so strikingly with its grand gauntlet-throwing-down gesture. This is a piece that Bavouzet first encountered through Horowitz's recording of his own edition of the work and he subsequently went to play it for the great man himself. So, as he writes, this recording, which uses Horowitz's version, is an act of homage.

It's all too easy for the sonata to sound so extreme that it becomes bitty, but Bavouzet gives it an overall sweep that is absolutely engaging. Others might be tempted to use the accentuation within the opening movement to drive things forwards more, or to take an even more kamikaze tempo in the finale (which is dangerously marked *Prestissimo possibile*), but the Frenchman knows exactly what he is doing: the finale is a masterclass in precision and clarity, even at speed, its more lyrical writing brought fully alive. And in the second-movement Scherzo the accentuation never becomes wearying on the ear. The work's heart lies in the variations on a theme by Clara, whose mournful theme Bavouzet takes most naturally, faster and more inevitable-sounding than Demidenko, colouring the following variations with imaginative flair.

The opening movement of *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* can sound unwieldy if a pianist doesn't find sufficient springiness in the chordal writing, but that's not an issue here and the interplay of athleticism and lyricism is unerringly done. Pires takes a different view, more

majestic, while Richter can sound merely relentless. But I prefer the Portuguese pianist in the Romanze, her haloed sound illuminating it from within. The Scherzino is, for Bavouzet, a study in mock pomposity, contrasting with the glorious Intermezzo, setting a gorgeous melody against churning accompaniment. Here I found the new recording just a tad strenuous-sounding – both Richter (bending the melody to his will) and Pires (confiding and tender) reveal its songful qualities more. But the chattering energy of the finale comes alive in Bavouzet's hands, contrasting deliciously with Schumann's little yearning phrases.

For the remainder of the recital we move to late Schumann, which suits Bavouzet well. The Op 111 *Fantasiestücke* are vividly drawn: by turns turbulent (No 1), halting and passionate (No 2) and full of contrast (No 3). But particularly special is the *Gesänge der Frühe*. It's striking that Bavouzet is generally much closer to the score's metronome markings than Anderszewski, though I do find the latter's performance endlessly compelling. Highlights include Bavouzet's shaping of the first, a solemn chorale whose anguish is barely concealed beneath the surface, the gnawing energy of the fourth, and the fifth, which is consoling in Bavouzet's hands, and altogether more spectral in Anderszewski's.

Harriet Smith

Piano Sonata No 3 – selected comparison:

Demidenko (1/97^R) (HYPE) CDH55300

Faschingsschwank aus Wien – selected comparisons:

Pires (6/95) (DG) 437 538-2GH

Richter (2/09) (EMI/WARN) 217411-2

Gesänge der Frühe – selected comparison:

Anderszewski (1/11^R) (VIRG/ERAT) 642022-0

'Four Worlds'

Behr Polka de WR (transcr Rachmaninov)

Bizet L'arlésienne – Menuet (arr Rachmaninov)

Gershwin Love walked in (arr Grainger)

Grainger Colonial Song. In Dahomey (Cakewalk Smasher). Irish Tune from County Derry. Ramble on the Love Duet from Strauss's Der

Rosenkavalier **Horowitz** Danse excentrique (Moment exotique). Valse **Rachmaninov** Piano Sonata No 2, Op 36. Morceaux de fantaisie, Op 3

– No 3, Mélodie; No 5, Sérénade. Morceaux de salon, Op 10 – No 5, Humoresque **Sousa** The Stars and Stripes Forever (arr Horowitz)

Moye Chen *pf*

DG © 481 7037 (77' • DDD)



The programme is an interesting – indeed, unique – collection of more or less popular

virtuoso encores composed by great pianist-composers, rounded off by Vladimir Horowitz's rarely heard conflation of the original and revised versions of Rachmaninov's Piano Sonata No 2. So far so good, and for anyone under a certain age not familiar with earlier recordings of these pieces (some by the composers themselves), one might be quite admiring of and even enthralled by the playing of Moye Chen. He certainly has a well-drilled finger technique and is not afraid of exploiting the full, sonorous depths of his Steinway at *fortissimo* and above.

Beyond that? Well, there are a whole string of musical decisions that make no sense to me. Take, for instance, the *Polka de WR* (usually 'WR' and, unlike here, nowadays listed as 'Behr, transcr Rachmaninov'). What is the leading voice in the opening measures? Why is the basic pulse pulled about so mercilessly? Why do the filigree runs have all the conviction of a pianola? Why allow the high G at 3'15" (marked *pp*) to ping like that? And so on.

The same reaction pertains to many other tracks. Why is the long trill in 'Love walked in' allowed to obliterate the main tune? Why does the piccolo part in *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, so wittily and nonchalantly dispatched by the transcriber in his celebrated recording, here become the main focus of attention? Would I choose Chen above Rachmaninov, Horowitz, Grainger or, for example, Hamelin (in Grainger) in their recordings of these pieces? No. Why? Because they are in a different league.

I had, in all honesty, all but given up in frustration but then came the final item, the Rachmaninov Sonata. The recorded piano sound is more focused and appealing than on the preceding 13 tracks and Moye Chen's playing is not only masterful and intelligently phrased but utterly compelling, forcing any unbelievers to admit that Horowitz's version (approved by Rachmaninov) is musically and structurally a completely convincing and arguably preferable alternative to the composer's two versions. Whether this is enough to save the disc is a moot point. **Jeremy Nicholas**

'Reflections'

Behr Polka de WR (transcr Rachmaninov)

Medtner Forgotten Melodies, Op 13 – No 3,

Danza festiva; No 6, Canzona serenata

Nikolayeva Concert Études, Op 13 – No 15; No 18

Prokofiev Visions fugitives, Op 22

Rachmaninov Six Moments musicaux, Op 16

Scriabin Two Poèmes, Op 32 **Tchaikovsky**

Lullaby, Op 16 No 1 (arr Rachmaninov)

Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev *pf*

Decca/Universal Music Australia © 483 3922 (82' • DDD)



Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev brings immaculate technique and pianistic flair to an enticing programme of Romantic works



Let me introduce you to Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev, a

young Russian pianist of whom you will probably not have heard unless you remember the announcement in the June 2017 issue of this magazine of his signing to Decca Classics and Universal Music Australia, the first time the two labels have collaborated. The result is 'Reflections', another of those meaningless disc titles – and, in this case, a singularly unimaginative one shared with well over a dozen other current piano recordings. It seems strange that a debut CD contains no biography of the artist. All we are told is that he is the grandson of the great Tatiana Nikolayeva no less (Wikipedia reveals that she died in November 1993, just nine months after Arseny was born). Believe me, he has inherited her musical genes.

To get an immediate idea of what kind of pianist I was going to hear, I turned first to the final track, the Behr-Rachmaninov *Polka de WR*. Here was elegance, charm, playfulness, clever voicing and an immaculate technique in a performance light years from the mauling of Moye Chen (see above). Then to the opening *Six Moments musicaux*. I have rarely heard the melancholy of the first of these captured to such heartbreaking effect, nor the impassioned outbursts of Nos 4 and 6 played with such unbridled vehemence – when Rachmaninov asks for *furioso* and *ffff* he gets it.

Two of Medtner's *Forgotten Melodies* and Scriabin's two *Poèmes* are further confirmation of a colourist par excellence (the rich, burnished tone Tarasevich-Nikolaev produces throughout a wide dynamic range is a noteworthy feature of the disc) before the centrepiece of Prokofiev's *Visions fugitives*. I found this fascinating when set alongside those which the composer recorded in 1935. In some I preferred the former, in

others the latter, who always ensures that the generic title of his collection is significant (compare the two pianists in No 10, marked *Ridicolosamente*, and you'll see what I mean). Further delights await us after the balm of the Tchaikovsky 'Lullaby' in Rachmaninov's arrangement: two studies from the 24 *Concert Études*, Op 13, by Tarasevich-Nikolaev's grandmother, the first of these (No 18, *Andante sostenuto*) ending with barely audible *ppp* high E sharps. Other pianists will surely want to investigate.

This is as outstanding a recent debut recording as I can recall, helped in no small measure by the dream team of producer Jeremy Hayes, engineer Ben Connellan and piano technician Graham Cooke at Potton Hall. Quite why it has taken 18 months to be released is a mystery.

Jeremy Nicholas

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

Michel van der Aa

Pwyl ap Siôn celebrates a composer who uses film, electronica and live music-making to create new multimedia worlds

‘I am staring into the clearest mirror. I am one,’ intones an old woman from a video screen at the end of Michel van der Aa’s chamber opera *One*. ‘I am one.’ The statement is directed towards a young female singer on stage – the opera’s only ‘real’ character – who finally comes face-to-face with a much older mirror-image of herself, projected through time, space and memory. Like Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, reality appears only as a shadow – a reflection, a mirror.

‘Am I one?’ It’s a question that has engaged the Dutch composer in various ways throughout a career that has now spanned 25 years.

Born in 1970, Van der Aa initially trained as a recording engineer at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague before receiving formal instruction in composition from Gilius van Bergeijk, Diderik Wagenaar and Louis Andriessen.

Dating from the mid-to-late 1990s, Van der Aa’s early works reflect the composer’s obsession with mixing live and pre-recorded elements while also reflecting an interest in creating musical ‘trilogies’. *Above* (1999), *Between* (1997) and *Attach* (2000) feature various ensembles alongside a pre-composed soundtrack, while *Just Before* (2002), *Auburn* (1994) and *Oog* (1995) follow a similar scheme with solo instruments.

The viewer experiences a form of ‘schizoponia’ where sound is separated from its source

In *Just Before* and *Oog*, the pre-recorded part is used in conjunction with solo piano and cello respectively to create a kind of super-instrument. *Auburn* for solo guitar and soundtrack plays on the instrument’s cultural associations and Hispanic roots (as a student, Van der Aa himself studied the guitar).

Such interactions see Van der Aa explore the intersection between the ‘here-and-now’ of live performance and the ‘there and then’ of pre-recorded music; or, as musicologist and journalist Mischa Spel put it, between ‘what is’ and ‘what was’. His compositions are therefore acts of musical time travelling where the soundtrack element provides the illusion of moving forwards and backwards through and across time.

Van der Aa’s music from the 1990s is often based on extreme shifts and contrasts. Single lines turn into dense chromatic branches, simple textures multiply into polytextual webs, a steady pulse collapses into complex rhythmic patterns, or a straightforward statement suddenly escalates into a panoply of multiple gestures. In *Attach*, for example, unisons



Van der Aa has used his skills as a film director to expand the scope of his operas

collide with percussive patterns that move in and out of phase, creating thick wedges of sound.

Such characteristics are further developed in the ambitious ‘Here’ trilogy. Composed between 2001–3, all three works engage with the same material from different perspectives. In *Here [in circles]* the music appears to be caught in a powerful rhythmic vortex which ends up quite literally going around in circles, while *Here [to be found]* represents a search that becomes increasingly fruitless. Rhythmically and harmonically restless, the music eventually stutters to a stop amidst a rattle glitches, beeps, bleeps and other electronic sounds.

It is perhaps appropriate that Van der Aa should use the term ‘soundtrack’ to describe the pre-recorded parts that frequently appear in his music as they often consist of both sounds and noises. Having completed a course in film directing at New York Film Academy in 2002, it should come as no surprise that the composer would later draw on these techniques in an operatic context.

The experience of film directing also appears to have had an effect on Van der Aa’s musical aesthetic, which becomes less cluttered and more direct from around this time. The ‘Here’ trilogy takes as its starting point the act of breaking a twig, and how such a simple act can take on extensive sonic and symbolic meanings and associations. In Van der Aa’s music, seemingly innocuous and incidental gestures can have significant repercussions. The idea is developed further in one of Van der Aa’s most impressive works, the aforementioned chamber opera for soprano and video, *One* (2002).

Beckettian in its sparse staging and concept (there are parallels here with the Irish playwright’s *Krapp’s Last Tape*) yet

VAN DER AA FACTS

Born on March 10, 1970, in Oss, The Netherlands

Studied as a recording engineer at The Hague Royal Conservatory, then composition with Gilius van Bergeijk, Diderik Wagenaar and Louis Andriessen

Breakthrough work

Between (1997)

Composer-in-residence at the Lucerne Summer Festival (2007)

Awards Gaudeamus Prize (1999) for *Between*; Matthijs Vermeulen Award (2004) for *One*; Siemens Composers Prize (2005); Grawemeyer Award (2013) for *Up-close*

thoroughly contemporary in its use of film and video, *One* explores the thoughts and fears of a single female character and her alter ego, as projected on a video screen at the back of the stage. The video voice thus becomes an artificial extension of the physical voice.

Vocal lines bounce back and forth between the live

singer and her on-screen double. The viewer thus experiences a form of 'schizophonia' where sound is separated from its source. The voice is no longer rooted in a physical body but takes on a different, alien and disembodied form. In her book *Postopera: Reinventing the Voice-Body*, Jelena Novak goes further, describing the work as a 'schizopera', arguing that the disintegration of the self in the opera eventually results in a kind of 'horror of identification' at the end. As philosopher and cultural commentator Jean Baudrillard once said, we live in any age of 'simulacrum and simulation ... a hyperreal sociality, where the real is confused with the model.' Am I one, indeed.

Such concerns are later developed in other multimedia operas, including the large-scale *After Life* (2005–6), the video opera *Sunken Garden* (2011–12) and a series of five one-minute operas, all of which question the notion of identity by grappling with it from multiple perspectives.


In the film opera *Sunken Garden*, the illusion of identity is extended via the use of 3D imagery. In a kind of postmodern twist on Gogol's *Dead Souls*, the opera is about a woman who tries to cheat death by inhabiting the souls of people who do not wish to live. The sunken garden itself becomes a strange, purgatorial, parallel universe which exists somewhere in-between the real and hyper-real, and the liminal space between life and death, past and present, fantasy and reality.

With his series of five one-minute operas produced between 2010–14, Van der Aa entered the domain of television or so-called 'CNN opera'. Commissioned by Netherlands TV Channel NPO 1, these mini-operas were performed live on the talk show programme *De Wereld Draait Door* ('The

World Keeps Turning'). Resembling the function of a news ticker or crawler, Van der Aa's first contribution was *With my Ear to the Ground*, which covered the Copiapó mining accident in Chile in 2010, where 33 workers were trapped for 69 days. His fifth one-minute opera highlighted the tragic disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in March 2014, while others have engaged with moral and political issues through the portrayal of prominent figures in Dutch society, from politicians to criminals.

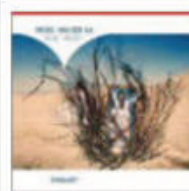
Perhaps the next natural step for Van der Aa was to explore such oppositions and conflicts through the medium of the concerto. The first of these, a cello concerto called *Up-close* (2010), fuses video opera, soundtrack, soloist and ensemble, while *Hysteresis* (2013) for solo clarinet, ensemble and soundtrack, engages with memory and nostalgia.

This was followed in June 2014 by a Violin Concerto. Premiered by Janine Jansen and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski, it's a work that draws more freely on a range of styles, from the brooding post-Romanticism of the opening, with its nod towards Alban Berg, to the final movement, which – in its kinetic drive and momentum – echoes the final movement of John Adams's Violin Concerto. An extensive percussion setup largely acts as a substitute for the 'soundtrack' component found in many of his other scores.

Looking ahead, a Double Concerto is planned for the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and cellist Sol Gabetta, for whom the composer wrote *Up-close*, with performances in Cologne, Amsterdam and Vancouver in May and June 2019. In an age where the self is being constantly challenged and erased through the dissemination of multiple personal profiles, overloaded images and endless reproductions, few composers have managed to articulate the crisis of identity that lies at the centre of postmodernity with such potent force and fierce individuality. 

VAN DER AA ON RECORD

From multimedia opera to concertos for leading soloists

**'Here' Trilogy**

Claron McFadden *sop* Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra / Peter Eötvös, Etienne Siebens
Disquiet Media (4/11)

Featuring the soprano Claron McFadden in

Parts 2 and 3, as Richard Whitehouse noted in his *Gramophone* review: 'the "Here" trilogy is a major achievement of recent European music.'

**One**

Barbara Hannigan *sop*
Disquiet Media

Written with the soprano Barbara Hannigan's extraordinary vocal agility and musicality in mind, this is a must-see DVD film of this striking and unsettling work.

**Violin Concerto, Hysteresis**

Janine Jansen *vn* Kari Kriikku *cl* / Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; Amsterdam Sinfonietta / Vladimir Jurowski, Candida Thompson
Disquiet Media

Representing Van der Aa's shift into more standard orchestral territory, the two concertos feature effortlessly commanding performances by the violinist Janine Jansen and clarinetist Kari Kriikku.

Vocal



Neil Fisher hears Diana Damrau and Jonas Kaufmann singing Wolf:

'As the themes grow more morbid, Kaufmann really excels as the writing grows more Wagnerian' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 78**



Hugo Shirley welcomes an unusual coupling from Stephan Loges:

'Though Yrjö Kilpinen, the "Finnish Schubert", remains compromised by his political affiliations, these songs are striking' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 80**

Berlioz

Roméo et Juliette, Op 17

Sasha Cooke *mez* Nicholas Phan *ten* Luca Pisaroni

bass-bar San Francisco Symphony Chorus and

Orchestra / Michael Tilson Thomas

SFS Media (M) (2) SFS0074 (105' • DDD/DSD)

Recorded live at Davies Symphony Hall,

San Francisco, June 28 – July 1, 2017



It's barely a few years ago that the Berlioz champion and biographer David

Cairns placed what was virtually an advertisement in *The Guardian* to bewail the relative neglect of this hybrid opera/cantata. His pleas were answered by a trickle of new recordings at least, some (Boulez, Gergiev, the young Robin Ticciati) from less than predictable performers. Cairns himself, of course, was involved in the preparation of the first recorded Colin Davis cycle, whose performances – as in the case of *Roméo* – continue to stand out for their imagination and sheer enthusiasm for the new.

The difficulties of realising this score in performance remain, of course – none more so than the tricky if original and imaginative moves from the partially choral to the largely orchestral (whose Part 1 celebrations of the Capulet ball continue to underpin film and TV of *The Three Musketeers* adventures). And the Friar Lawrence-dominated finale is quite a block to end with, nowhere better characterised than by Gilles Cachemaille for John Eliot Gardiner's extra-complete Decca recording. Here shafts of wit, specifically reminiscent of the character in Shakespeare's play (although not, of course, Berlioz's primary source), help leaven what can become, as on this new version, a rather preachy ending.

Michael Tilson Thomas has long been a committed explorer of the Romantic highways. His San Francisco forces provide a typically well-prepared and fluent account of Berlioz's score, slightly (deliberately?)

on the cool side, which seems wholly in keeping with the work's intentionally distanced take on the story. The choral singing is well-rounded, just lacking the last degree of familiarity and French fizz that European choruses can bring; the soloists are efficient rather than inspired, with Pisaroni's Friar on the grand side. Similarly, although this is not programme music in the Straussian sense of seeking to describe exactly an egg or a teaspoon, it's necessary for the work's dramatic thread that the conductor and his players keep a clear emotional track on Roméo's feelings in the Capulets' garden. Here, avoiding any grandstanding emotionalism, MTT is rather neutral compared to Davis, Gardiner or Boulez (the latter's interesting Cleveland recording surely another stage in his private quest better to understand Wagner, this score's most famous fan).

It's a case at the end of the day of there being little 'wrong' with this new version. It's a serious representation of the notes. It's just not an especially distinctive view of the piece overall compared with Davis 1 and 3 (the two LSO versions), Gardiner (with his uncovered cuts), Boulez (heavier) or the young Ticciati (lighter). Whichever you choose, do take on the whole piece and not the 'cheat' (however seductive) of just the orchestral excerpts. **Mike Ashman**

Selected comparisons:

LSO, Davis (12/68^R) (PHIL) ➔ 478 9300

ORR, Gardiner (3/98^R) (DECC) 478 3934DF2

LSO, Davis (7/00) (LSO) LSO0003 or LSO0827

Cleveland Orch, Boulez (4/04) (DG) 474 237-2GH2

LSO, Gergiev (10/16) (LSO) LSO0762

Swedish RSO, Ticciati (10/16) (LINN) CKD521

Brahms

Die schöne Magelone, Op 33

John Chest *bar* Marcelo Amaral *pf*

Alpha (E) ALPHA431 (57' • DDD • T/t)



The young American baritone John Chest has already

received lavish praise in these pages.

Tim Ashley described his contribution to the opening volume of Signum's cycle of Fauré songs as a revelation, praising 'deep commitment, flawless phrasing and an easy warmth of tone' (10/16). Now, for his first solo disc, he turns to another autumnal master of song, Brahms, and to the nearest thing he wrote to a cycle, *Die schöne Magelone* – settings of the lyrics that are dotted like poetic markers through Ludwig Tieck's sentimental medieval romance of the same name.

The virtues of Chest's singing are still very much in evidence. The voice itself is both beautiful and immediately engaging, virile but distinguished by an appealing vulnerability and urgent catch in the timbre. His German is impeccable, too, his way with Tieck's words natural, engaged and engaging. He's matched by vivid, supportive playing from the outstanding Brazilian pianist Marcelo Amaral.

They offer plenty of *Schwung* as we set off in 'Keinen hat es noch gereut' and are properly melting in 'Liebe kam aus fernen Landen' and a lovely account of 'Ruhe, Süßliebchen', where the tender urgency of Chest's timbre is especially effective. Both there and in 'Muss es eine Trennung geben', you can sense fully the protagonist's longing, the sense of heartbreak.

As one would expect, this is very much a young man's account of the cycle, and you'll not yet find the same interpretative riches of a Gerhaher or Fischer-Dieskau in such songs as 'Sind es schmerzen, sind es freuden'. Nor does Chest yet command the same ability to colour the voice; some phrases can feel pushed, too, and he risks running out of juice a little at the top of bigger phrases. But there's a great deal to like here in what's a fine youthful account of this cycle from a highly engaging and appealing singer who, I suspect, is only going to get better and better. **Hugo Shirley**

Selected comparison:

Gerhaher, Huber (3/17) (SONY) 88985 41312-2

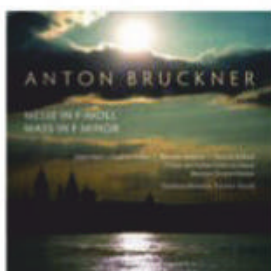


Joyful adventure: El León de Oro and Peter Phillips present an interesting programme of Lamentations and settings of Regina caeli – see review on page 78

Bruckner

Mass No 3 (1893 edition)

Jutta Hörl *sop* **Gudrun Pelker** *contr* **Thorsten Büttner** *ten* **Derrick Ballard** *bass* **Susanne Stoodt** *vn*
Silke Volk *va* **Daniel Beckmann** *org* **Choirs and Orchestra of Mainz Cathedral / Karsten Storck**
 Rondeau Production © ROP6161 (61' • DDD • T/t)
 Recorded live, April 29, 2018



Karsten Storck is not a name I've previously encountered in the music of Bruckner but this performance of the F minor Mass is as fine as any I've heard. So supreme a work of art is Bruckner's third and final Mass that it's difficult to believe its composition predates not only Symphonies Nos 2-9 but also the unnumbered Symphony in D minor. Storck's performance communicates the greatness and sublimity of the music with remarkable conviction, leaving one profoundly moved and impressed anew at the composer's achievement. The Mainz Cathedral Choir, of which Storck became director in 2012, sing with fluency and eloquence throughout, bringing jubilation to the *Gloria*, stealing in ethereally at the start

of the *Sanctus* and rising to passionate incandescence in the final section of the *Agnus Dei*.

There are numerous felicities in the orchestral playing too, including first-rate solo contributions from violin and viola in the *Credo* (the players Susanne Stoodt and Silke Volk rightly credited in the booklet note) as well as from woodwinds, horn and timpani. Many conductors match the yearningly expressive playing that Storck summons from the cellos at the start of the *Benedictus* but it's rare for the passage scored for first and second violins commencing at bar 66 (4'40") in the same movement to sound as profound and searching as it does here. Like a number of other conductors, including Jochum and Welser-Möst, Storck makes use of an organ to supplement *tutti* passages, an addition sanctioned with the words *ad libitum* in the Bruckner Gesamtausgabe (Complete Edition). Storck's deployment of the organ is especially imaginative and sensitive in the latter half of the *Benedictus*, where the additional tone colour brings extra radiance to the setting. The four solo vocalists are also excellent, although Jutta Hörl's soprano takes a while to settle in the opening *Kyrie*.

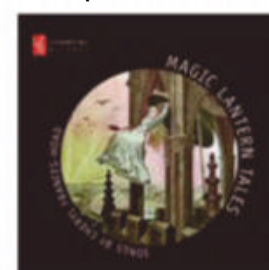
The recording copes remarkably well with the extended reverberation

of Mainz Cathedral, the clear and weighty sound offering an immersive experience uninterrupted by audience noise. Although not indicated in the booklet note, Storck uses the familiar 1893 version of the Mass, incorporating Bruckner's final amendments to a masterpiece originally written 25 years earlier. **Christian Hoskins**

Frances-Hoad

Blurry Bagatelle^a. Invoke now the Angels^b. Lament^c. Love Bytes^d. Magic Lantern Tales^e. Scenes from Autistic Bedtimes^f. A Song Incomplete^g. Star Falling^h. The Thought Machineⁱ

ⁱSophie Daneman, ^fNatalie Raybould, ^bVerity Wingate *sops* ^cAnna Huntley, ^bSinéad O'Kelley *mezs* ^fEdward Nieland *treb* ^bColin Shay *counterten*
^eNicky Spence *ten* ^dPhilip Smith, ⁱMark Stone *bars*
^{df}Anna Menzies *vc* ^{df}Beth Higham-Edwards *vibraphone* ^{bcfg}Alisdair Hogarth, ^{aehi}Sholto Kynoch *pf* ^{df}George Jackson *cond*
 Champs Hill © CHRC146 (80' • DDD • T)



'My hero is Benjamin Britten.' This affirmation comes in a discussion from 2011

between Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Andrew Palmer, and its musical consequences can be heard in Frances-Hoad's *Invoke now the Angels*, written to mark the 2013 Britten centenary. She describes the piece as 'a response to Britten's Canticles I and II', and the text (by the Jamaican poet Kai Miller) underpins a gripping dramatic scena that deals with the kind of violence and sacrifice averted in the Bible's Abraham and Isaac story but very much not averted in 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young', a poem by Wilfred Owen set by Britten in *War Requiem*.

Neither here nor in the disc's other especially memorable vocal setting, of the brief but searing 'Lament' by Andrew Motion, does Frances-Hoad closely imitate Britten. Rather, her music shares with his, and with that of British contemporaries as diverse as Judith Weir, Howard Skempton, Jonathan Dove and Joseph Phibbs, a sense of the inexhaustible lure of the diatonic and the consonant. Some will call it postmodern but the increasing confidence with which younger composers use such materials could make a case for calling it 'populist', were that term's current political and social connotations less negative. At her best, Frances-Hoad is immediately accessible without being ephemeral, and the conviction and energy of the performances recorded here confirm the authenticity of the feelings and ideas being expressed. But there are risks involved too.

In *Magic Lantern Tales* (2015), settings of poems by Ian McMillan which have a strong anti-war theme, the overall effect is touching and strongly characterised, yet the admirable Nicky Spence has to use Yorkshire intonations which are difficult to bring off in this art-song context. The performers are more obviously at ease in the comical wordplay of *Love Bytes* and *The Thought Machine*, where the composer's skill in finding texts that suit her and in providing winsome and witty music without sinking into the effortful or the earnest is simply delightful.

Scenes from Autistic Bedtimes, the last item on this well-filled CD, is the result of an operatic workshop that attempts something much more serious. When such unvarnished realism is aspired to, aesthetics can run into difficulties, and this trio of brief scenes contrasting the obsessive child (a remarkable assumption by the treble Edward Nieland) with the thoughts and reactions of his mother, starting with speech and progressing to ever-more intense song, still seems very much a work in progress. Frances-Hoad's musical style, perfectly suited to the wide

range of emotions, from tragic to comic, explored in the disc's earlier items, falters in face of an agonisingly personal, painful set of circumstances that defies artistic representation. In context, however, that simply reinforces the unsparing honesty and clarity of what this disc as a whole has to offer. **Arnold Whittall**

Handel

'Chandos' *Te Deum*, HWV281^a.

Chandos Anthem No 8, 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord', HWV253

Grace Davidson *sop* Charles Daniels, Nicholas Mulroy, ^aBenedict Hymas *tens* Edward Grint *bass*
London Handel Orchestra / Adrian Butterfield
Onyx © ONYX4203 (66' • DDD • T)



The longest of Handel's five settings of the *Te Deum* canticle

was probably composed in 1718 or perhaps early 1719 for performance at St Lawrence's, Little Stanmore – the parish church of James Brydges, the Earl of Carnarvon (elevated as the Duke of Chandos in April 1719), who paid for its handsome rebuilding in continental Baroque style. While the nearby house Cannons is long gone, the church is preserved gloriously intact, and is the entirely authentic location for the London Handel Orchestra and Adrian Butterfield's recording (albeit the musicians are not positioned at the east end around the painstakingly restored organ, which is slightly too sharp in pitch to have been used in the sessions).

Fielding only a dozen players and five singers (the peculiar line-up of soprano, three tenors and bass is identical to the near-contemporary *Acis and Galatea*), this is a rare attempt to perform Handel's Cannons-period church music with something close to the correct constitution of voices and instruments (perhaps a few boys sang the top part). The only previous recording of the *Te Deum* (Arte Nova, 1994) was a patchy 'choral' account, whereas Butterfield's slimline performing forces fit the music like a glove. The single voices combine harmoniously in contrapuntal choruses, and unaccompanied passages are shaded poignantly. Charles Daniels's deft navigation of a stratospheric register interweaves deftly with Nicholas Mulroy's soaring on the highest tenor parts, Benedict Hymas delivers the lower tenor line articulately, and Edward Grint and Grace Davidson sing the outer parts with intelligent precision. Their

conversational transparency is matched by expertly stylish playing.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord (circa spring 1718) accords more prominence to solo airs: 'O come, let us worship', featuring pairs of pastoral recorders and violins, is sung gorgeously by Daniels; Davidson's 'O magnify the Lord', accompanied intimately by two staccato violins, has hushed sensitivity. The STTB choruses are articulately detailed. Bigger-scale interpretations by The Sixteen (Chandos, 2/90) and the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge (Hyperion, 7/13) both adjusted Handel's peculiar choral scoring of the anthem for conventional forces – as do almost all recordings of the so-called Chandos Anthems, much to the detriment of their musical aesthetic. Butterfield's decisions make much better musical sense, and the relaxed sincerity of his musicians yields revelatory new insights. **David Vickers**

Handel

Messiah, HWV56 (arr Stian Aareskjold)

Susanna Hurrell *sop* Rebecca Afonwy-Jones *mez*
Samuel Boden *ten* James Platt *bass* BBC Singers;
The Norwegian Wind Ensemble / David Hill
Resonus © RES10219 (142' • DDD • T)



The size and nature of forces employed in the history of *Messiah*, and their impact on

performance practices over the ages, takes us into a labyrinthine world. Additional wind instruments as a means of 'judicious improvement' started as early as Adam Hiller's famous performance in Berlin Cathedral in 1786 – and there has followed a run of expansive interpretations into the 'modern' era of Wood and then Goossens's version under Beecham.

Here, though, we have winds as a genuine alternative to the strings-plus-winds-plus-brass gargantuan model. Stian Aareskjold of The Norwegian Wind Ensemble has, if anything, transcribed *Messiah* for winds and chamber choir as a means of resonating with certain historical sensibilities and, with the use of a harpsichord continuo, even practices. At best, it presents some gloriously tactile and supple solutions to this almost bomb-proof masterpiece. 'Comfort ye' is one of many atmospheric movements, in this case beguiling in a spare translucence underpinning Samuel Boden's beautiful annunciation and shaping. The choruses in Part 1, especially, unveil an easy balance between the 'Harmoniemusik' accompaniment and the resilient bravura



New perspectives: The Norwegian Wind Ensemble and BBC Singers combine forces in an unusual version of Handel's *Messiah*

and highly experienced execution of the BBC Singers.

Taken as a whole, the results are something of a curate's egg. There are times where the medium offers attractive new perspectives (the Pifa is wonderfully bucolic in its new feathers, and how winsome the flutes seem in 'How beautiful are thy feet') and other occasions where harmonic clarity becomes the trade-off for the kind of textural warmth you get with strings. The 'Hallelujah' sounds as if it's on helium, such is the predominance of upper partials; one recalls the kind of military band accompaniments from acoustic recordings of the early 20th century. The upper winds can sound a touch wearing over a couple of hours, though credit must be given to Aareskjold's clever allocation of roles in the interest of both variety and stamina, and Hill's well-fashioned approach to speed and dynamics rides over some potential pitfalls.

Of the singers, each seems more comfortable in some arias than others. It's also asking a lot to rein back the opulently operatic instincts of Susanna Hurrell in what is quite an intimate environment. James Platt delivers 'The people that walked in darkness' with great authority though he's rather less settled in Handel's

bass version of 'But who may abide'. Likewise, Rebecca Afonwy-Jones gradually warms to her task with a touchingly open-hearted simplicity in 'He shall feed his flock' and a finely honed reading of 'He was despised'.

If not revelatory, this performance in Aareskjold's transcription is rather more than a curiosity: it's the underlying tenderness of the new orchestration which will ensure return visits, and the unfussy high-quality wind playing of NEW in tandem with the evergreen BBC Singers.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Haydn

Il ritorno di Tobia, HobXXI:1

Sen Guo, **Valentina Farcas** *sops* **Ann Hallenberg**

mez **Mauro Peter** *ten* **Ruben Drole** *bass-bar*

Arnold Schoenberg Choir; Orchestra La Scintilla /

Nikolaus Harnoncourt

Orfeo ® © C952 1821 (149' • DDD • T)

Recorded live at the Felsenreitschule, Salzburg, August 19, 2013



Asked by the Zurich period orchestra La Scintilla to

choose a work for a charity performance, Nikolaus Harnoncourt gave a typically left-field response: Haydn's little-known Italian oratorio *Il ritorno di Tobia*, hampered by an inept, sub-Metastasian libretto that botches almost every opportunity for drama in the story of Tobias from the Apocrypha. With its succession of vast bravura arias, framed in the original version by just three choral numbers, the oratorio was already deemed old-fashioned in Haydn's lifetime. Concert performances will always remain scarce. But as the studio recordings by Dorati (Decca, 10/94 – nla) and, especially, Christoph Spering have shown, if you can adjust to the ultra-leisurely time-scale, there is a wealth of vivid, richly worked music in what is essentially a Neapolitan-style sacred opera.

Both on its 1775 premiere and its 1784 revival (for which Haydn pruned several arias and added two magnificent choruses), the receipts from *Tobia* went to the Viennese society supporting of musicians' widows and orphans. Proceeds from this 2013 Salzburg performance were given, aptly, to a charity supporting youth projects in war-ravaged Bosnia. Harnoncourt obviously believes fervently in the work, and with one exception he

Hazard Chase

International artist & project management

Ensembles

Bach Collegium Japan

Bang on a Can All-Stars

Brodsky Quartet

The Gesualdo Six

Polyphony

Tafelmusik Baroque
Orchestra

The Tallis Scholars

Vox Luminis

Visit our website for full contact details and to
see current artist and project lists.

www.hazardchase.co.uk



@hazardchaseLtd



Hazard Chase Limited



REVOLUCIONARIO

Quinteto Astor Piazzolla

To honor maestro Piazzolla's musical legacy, Laura Escalada Piazzolla created an ensemble of five virtuoso soloists capable of interpreting the vast body of work left by the composer who revolutionized tango. The current Astor Piazzolla Quintet has toured the world for more than 20 years, and has been acclaimed by the international press as the only ensemble truly able to represent the unique and inimitable style of the great Astor Piazzolla.

This release contains a dozen works composed between 1950 and 1980, from *Tango para una ciudad* to *Retrato de Alfredo Gobbi*, *Fracanapa*, *Revolucionario*, *Milonga for Three* and *Finale* and more.



E54 MUSIC

WWW.QUINTETOASTORPIAZZOLLA.COM
© & © 2018 EAST 54 ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

fields a good cast. Yet the result is at best a mixed success. For one thing the acoustic of the Felsenreitschule is paradoxically both cavernous and, as caught here, airless. Balances are sometimes awry (the excellent Arnold Schoenberg Choir lacks impact), with an over-prominent jangly harpsichord. And while La Scintilla play with a will, their tuning and ensemble are, perhaps inevitably, rougher than on either of the rival recordings. Violins are underpowered, oboes and cors anglais (whose pungent timbre colours many numbers) faintly wheezy. In the luxuriously scored aria 'Non parmi essere' – a *sinfonia concertante* for soprano and wind – the players of Spering's Capella Augustina are in a different league for polish and poetry.

True to form, Harnoncourt's direction favours brusqueness and punchy rhetoric over elegance. The searing 'storm' chorus, 'Svanisce in un momento', is frenetically driven, the players barely clinging on. Conversely, recitatives and lyrical arias can plod, with Haydn's repeated bass lines chugging rather than gently pulsing. As on Spering's recording, Ann Hallenberg is perfectly cast as Tobit's wife Anna. Making more of her words than anyone else in the cast, she brings a terrific energy to her opening coloratura aria (and never mind the odd wild moment above the stave), and uses her sulphurous chest register to baleful effect in her 'nightmare' aria in Part 2.

Sopranos Valentina Farcas, as Tobias's wife Sara, and Sen Guo, as the disguised Archangel Raphael, both display bright, confident tone and rise impressively to Haydn's virtuoso demands. Farcas also sings the ravishing 'Non parmi essere' – described by Harnoncourt as 'the oratorio's high point' – with much delicacy of feeling. Of the men, I enjoyed Mauro Peter's youthful tones and graceful phrasing as Tobias, though his low notes lack fibre in the bravura aria 'Quel felice nocchier'. In the predominantly reflective role of the blind Tobit, Ruben Drole sings coarsely, like a misplaced *basso buffo*. Legato is evidently an alien concept to him. Harnoncourt completists will doubtless want this; and the occasion was evidently a moving one. But for all the merits of this Salzburg performance, Spering's recording – more fluently paced, better played and on the whole even better sung – remains my recommendation for anyone wanting to explore a fascinating, sometimes thrilling Haydn rarity.

Richard Wigmore

Selected comparison:

Spering (2/08) (NAXO) 8 570300/2

Rore

'Vieni, dolce Imeneo'

Chansons à 4 et 5 parties – No 24, Vieni, dolce Imeneo. Madrigals: Book 2 – No 1, Un'altra volta la Germania strida; No 5, O sonno; No 9, Mia benigna fortuna; Book 4 – No 2, O morte, eterno fin; No 3, Alcun non può saper; No 6, Volgi'l tuo corso; No 7, Come la notte; No 12, Di virtù di costumi; No 24, Sebben il duol; No 26, L'alto signor; Book 5 – No 1, Mentre lumi maggior; No 2, Da le belle contrade; No 10, Non è lasso martire; No 13, Convien ch'ovunque; Le vive fiamme – No 6, Alma Susanna; No 11, Tra più beati e più sublimi cori; No 15, Poi che mi invita amore; No 16, Candido e vago fiore

La Compagnia del Madrigale

Glossa © GCD922808 (69' • DDD • T/t)

Rore

Le Vergine

Currende / Erik Van Nevel

Etcetera © KTC1630 (72' • DDD • T/t)

Recorded live at the chapel of the LUCA School of Arts, Leuven, September 2017



Given his renown as a composer of madrigals, it comes as a shock that Cipriano de Rore's discography is so skewed towards the sacred music. Graindelavoix's typically idiosyncratic recent survey (Glossa, 2/18) began to redress the balance, and here are two new recordings entirely devoted to them. The selection from La Compagnia del Madrigale is especially significant: it brings together a score of his most famous settings, mostly from his wondrous late period. The sinuous but chordal chromaticism of 'Sebben il duol' has a magical ring to it, foreshadowing the later madrigalists while retaining the formal lucidity that characterises his output. For me this is one of the standouts, but the entire collection is perhaps the best introduction to Cipriano now available. At its best it equals anything that has been done in this repertory by the other ensembles in which these hugely experienced singers have sung: the tuning of the stately yet intimate 'Alma Susanna' positively rings, and the formal severity of 'O sonno' is wonderfully legible. So fine is it that one regrets that the standard falls sometimes just short of such heights: what might have been had the tuning in 'Sebben il duol' been just that bit truer, its transitions still more finely staged? If Cipriano leaves his interpreters little

room to hide, he sets them a challenge that the listener can really appreciate, and that appreciation is bound to grow the more one listens. The way they set up and then launch into the second part of 'Mia benigna fortuna' (the famous 'Crudel acerba') is positively bracing.

Cipriano's complete setting of Petrarch's stanzas to the Virgin were recorded by the Hilliard Ensemble early in their career, more than 35 years ago (Harmonia Mundi, 2/84); and, though a little straitlaced, theirs is a sunny, lucid performance. But again it comes as a surprise that it has had no successors (to my knowledge). Currende's approach could hardly be more different: a live performance mixing voices and instruments, it introduces each stanza with a spoken recitation of the text by an Italian member of the ensemble, delivered with genuine feeling. All the stanzas are performed straight through with voices but are preceded with excerpted passages given over to instruments entirely. These changes of scoring give a sense of variety, and there is also a degree of ornamentation, something that isn't done enough in modern performances. But not all these strategies translate positively from live performance to disc: the purely instrumental episodes strike me as superfluous, a view that others may not share but which inevitably colours the overall impression. The recitations are to my mind especially distracting, especially given the sonic artefacts (coughs, squeaky chairs) that intrude more often than one expects in a professional recording. Because recitation and music are on the same track, the listener cannot simply skip them (a minor point, perhaps, but an unnecessarily rigid use of the technology). As with the details of the performance itself, it's hard not to conclude that such a thoughtful project would have benefited from a studio recording and stronger editorial control.

Fabrice Fitch

Sullivan

The Light of the World

Natalya Romaniw, Eleanor Dennis *sops* **Kitty**

Whately *contr* **Robert Murray** *ten* **Ben McAteer** *bar*

Neal Davies *bass* **Kinder Children's Choir;**

BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC Concert Orchestra /

John Andrews

Dutton Epoch © 2 2CDLX7356

(146' • DDD/DSD • T)



Now here's a genuine find. Premiered to enormous acclaim

at the 1873 Birmingham Musical Festival, the 31-year-old Arthur Sullivan's large-scale oratorio *The Light of the World* (to a strikingly eclectic text compiled by his good friend George Grove, himself an amateur biblical scholar of renown) emerges after many decades of unjust neglect as a splendidly distinctive, unstuffy achievement, brimful of captivating melodic charm, communicative flair and technical confidence, always displaying an enviably sure dramatic instinct (Gounod for one had no hesitation in pronouncing it a masterpiece).

Especially imaginative is Sullivan's deployment of an inner-orchestra to accompany the words of Jesus, the mellow timbre of violas, cellos, cor anglais, bass clarinet and contrabassoon registering to frequently ear-pricking effect. Listen out, too, for a clutch of exhilarating, at times arrestingly Lisztian choruses ('I will pour my spirit', 'The grave cannot praise thee', 'Hosanna to the Son of David', 'Men and brethren' and 'Him hath God exalted'). Other highlights include the lovely quintet 'Doubtless thou art our Father' and soprano aria 'Tell ye the Daughter of Zion' (such enchantingly Mendelssohnian clarinets), the powerful Overture to Part 2, Mary Magdalene's almost operatic 'Lord, why hidest thou thy face?', and that piercingly expressive orchestral interlude that opens the final scene entitled 'At the Sepulchre – Morning' (pre-echoes here of Elgar). Wonderfully affecting, too, is the purely orchestral introduction to the memorable 'Weep ye not for the dead', and the sublime unaccompanied vocal quartet 'Yea, though I walk through the valley' (both these numbers were in fact performed at Sullivan's funeral in 1900).

No praise can be too high for the present big-hearted revival. John Andrews directs proceedings with the utmost care and infectious conviction, and elicits ideally fervent and polished results from his assembled choral and orchestral forces. Among the excellent team of soloists there are standout contributions from the baritone Ben McAteer, mezzo-soprano Kitty Whately and soprano Eleanor Dennis. The SACD sound is superb, possessing a most beguiling warmth and amplitude, while the balance throughout has been most judiciously struck. Dutton's copious presentation is a model of its kind, incorporating full texts as well as outstandingly thoughtful essays by Martin Yates and Ian Bradley. Plaudits to everyone involved with this enterprising release. **Andrew Achenbach**

Wolf

Italienisches Liederbuch

Diana Damrau *sop* Jonas Kaufmann *ten*

Helmut Deutsch *pf*

Erato © 9029 56586-6 (77' • DDD • T/t)

Recorded live at the Alfred Krupp Saal,

Philharmonie Essen, Germany, February 18, 2018



In the depths of winter, who isn't longing for a summer holiday, and – even

better – a holiday romance? So the timing is right for this recording of Hugo Wolf's *Italian Songbook*, not a true song-cycle but a collection of vignettes, his story and her story, capturing the foibles of love, courtship, jealousy, pain and parting (the texts are translated into German from anonymous Italian poets). We don't have two real characters here but we have three voices: a man's, a woman's and a piano. If he and she can't seem to agree on much, usually the piano gets the last word.

Recorded live towards the end of their tour performing these 46 miniatures, Jonas Kaufmann and Diana Damrau give the piece something of a glossy reboot, and it's a useful one, for a serious, single-composer *Liederabend* is no longer an automatic box-office draw, even in Germany and Austria. Each is probably the foremost German singer of their voice type in the world today, and both have excelled in Italian repertoire, so who better to take Wolf's journey south of the Alps?

The 'Diana and Jonas show' was, by all accounts, really something of a show. Supported by the pianist Helmut Deutsch, who reorganised the songs into a very loose emotional narrative, the two also play-acted for the audience. This survives on record only as the sound of occasional audience chortling, which is jarring when often what's been sung is actually verging on the tragic or bitter. Such is the ambiguity of these fascinating songs, which play with the lyricism of Italian opera and balladry while at the same time disdaining it.

Of the two singers, the bright-voiced Damrau is the more nuanced and precise with text, even if Wolf mostly allocates his female singer the role of the coquette or minx. Still, she digs deep. 'Ich bin verliebt, doch eben nicht in dich' – 'I'm in love, but not with you' – is poignantly and cleverly delivered in 'Du denkst mit einem Fädchen mich zu fangen'. And she finds a palpably erotic frisson behind 'Wie lange schon war immer mein Verlangen', a plea for a musician (any musician?) to come and woo her.

Kaufmann, husky and intense, has less in his Lieder toolkit but he is completely committed to the material. You may surrender to his breathy-verging-on-crooning *pianissimo* singing or detest it – it's not deployed too often here to grate. In a central section where the themes grow more morbid, he really excels as the writing grows more Wagnerian: 'Und willst du deinen Liebsten sterben sehen' unfolds in an almost *Tristan*-esque haze, directly followed by the rich melancholy of 'Sterb' ich, so hüllt in Blumen meine Glieder'.

While Kaufmann and Damrau are clearly at ease with each other and the chemistry really works, there are no duets here. The expressive glue is in fact Deutsch, with his unsentimental probing of Wolf's ruthlessly concise writing and often devastating delivery of those fascinating, heart-stopping cadences. **Neil Fisher**

'Amarae morti'

Cardoso Lamentatio Feria quinta in Coena

Domini – Lectio II Gombert Media vita Lassus

Lamentatio tertia, prima diei. Media vita. Regina

caeli Morales Regina caeli Palestrina Laudate

pueri Phinot Incipit oratio Jeremiae prophetae

Victoria Magnificat primi toni. Regina caeli

El León de Oro / Peter Phillips

Hyperion © CDA68279 (66' • DDD • T/t)



Here is a delightful disc made to an interesting recipe: Lamentation texts

in alternation with joyful settings of *Regina caeli* sung with passion and puppyish intensity by a large and charismatic chamber choir directed by the *éminence grise* of Ars Perfecta, Peter Phillips. The result has the air of joyful adventure about it; proudly choral (as opposed to consort) but with absolutely captivating clarity.

Founded in 1997, El León de Oro (LDO) were the winners of Peter Phillips's 2014 London International A Cappella Choral Competition under their regular director Marco Antonio García de Paz. Phillips has worked with them since, and this is their first album together. The programme presents Lamentations by Phinot (c1510–c1556), Lassus (c1530–1594) and Cardoso (1566–c1650) with motets, largely settings of *Media vita* or *Regina caeli*, by contemporaries Gombert (c1495–1560), Victoria (1548–1611) and Morales (c1500–1553). Their sound is soft and warm, and favours long, flowing phrases over bulging points of imitation. In short, they sound the way *Mensurstrich* looks. In comparison to many British ensembles their balance



Melancholy with a light heart: soprano Kate Macoboy and lutenist Robert Meunier present a Michelangelo-inspired programme – see review on page 80

is slightly bottom-heavy but the lower voices make such an attractive sound in the resonant acoustic of Iglesia de Santiago el Mayor, Sariego, Asturias, that it often works in their favour. In particular, I love the passage ‘Cervicibus minabamur’ (‘Our necks were threatened’) in Phinot’s Lamentation setting in which the lower voices create great shimmering puddles of rich polyphony. The words are occluded but the sound is sumptuousness itself.

Victoria’s effusive *Regina caeli* is an interesting case in point. This is not the strident Victoria of British consorts, it is soft-footed and charming. While I still prefer a steelier soprano line, I find myself caught off guard by the simple passion of this choir. Less successful is Victoria’s *Magnificat*, which lacks the graceful touch found elsewhere on this album. LDO are perhaps at their best in the final motets, Morales’s *Regina caeli* and Palestrina’s *Laudate pueri*, where a broad, expansive approach brings a solidity and gravitas to their rejoicing. **Edward Breen**

‘Enchanted Isle’

Adès Arcadiana, Op 12 – No 6, O Albion **Barber** Agnus Dei **Brennan** Theme from Harry’s Game **Djawadi** Game of Thrones – The Rains of Castamere **Enya/Ryan** The Lord of the Rings – May it be **Forrest** The sun never says **Hession** She walks in beauty **MacLean** Caledonia

Radiohead Pyramid Song **Runestad** Let my love be heard **Tavener** Song for Athene **Traditional** Carrickfergus. Danny Boy. My love is like a red, red rose. The Parting Glass. Soay **Wintory** Journey – I was born for this

Voces8

Decca © 483 4670DH (79’ • DDD)



‘Enchanted Isle’ is a disc in the throes of an identity crisis. Presumably designed

to straddle the elusive classical-popular divide, this collision of traditional British and Irish folk songs, pop, easy listening and everything else from Thomas Adès to Enya is bewildering, not least because it all ends up sounding almost exactly the same.

The group’s musical signature here becomes a template into which everything must fit, even if that means stretching, contorting or amputating the works themselves. This is partly a product of the sound quality – often so over-produced that it may as well have been recorded with auto-tune in a studio instead of by a superb group of singers in a naturally resonant church – and partly of arrangements that all come from the same stable, sharing the same grudging ration of chords and choral effects.

What a waste of talent – because there really is talent to burn here. In addition to the crack vocal team that is Voces8 (complete with a lovely supple new soprano in Eleanore Cockerham) you only have to look down the list of instrumentalists (including violinist Thomas Gould, harpist Eleanor Turner and cellist Matthew Sharp, to name just three) to feel excited at the recording this could so easily have been.

A broadly Celtic theme somehow shoehorns in Austin Wintory’s videogame score *Journey*, Radiohead and Barber’s *Adagio*, wrapping them up in soft-focus, twilit chordal smudging and lashings of soprano emoting until everything sounds like an offcut from James Horner’s *Titanic* soundtrack. But it’s worth taking time to listen to ‘Carrickfergus’ for the airy beauty of the young Irish singer Sibéal’s guest vocals, as well as the novelty that is Jim Clements’s skilful reworking of Adès’s ‘O Albion’ from his 1994 string quartet *Arcadiana*. **Alexandra Coghlan**

‘Messa per Rossini’

Buzzolla Requiem. Kyrie **Bazzini** Dies irae **Pedrotti** Tuba mirum **Cagnoni** Quid sum miser **Ricci** Recordare Jesu pie **Nini** Ingemisco **Boucheron** Confutatis **Coccia** Lacrimosa. Amen **Gaspari** Offertorio **Platania** Sanctus **Rossi** Agnus Dei **Mabellini** Lux aeterna **Verdi** Libera me, Domine

María José Siri *sop* **Veronica Simeoni** *mez*
Giorgio Berrugi *ten* **Simone Piazzola** *bar*
Riccardo Zanellato *bass* **Chorus and Orchestra**
of the Teatro alla Scala, Milan / Riccardo Chailly
 Decca (M) © 483 4084DH2 (101' • DDD • T/t)



It was shortly after Rossini's death in November 1868 that Verdi proposed the writing of a *Messa per Rossini*, a Requiem Mass to which 13 leading Italian composers would contribute a movement apiece. It was, in essence, a memorial act. After its premiere, so Verdi stipulated, it would be placed in the archives of Bologna's Liceo Musicale, to be released only on such anniversary occasions as posterity deemed suitable.

That first performance never happened, a victim of parish-pump politics and inter-city rivalries. Verdi's own contribution, the 'Libera me', has come down to us (slightly altered) in his own *Messa da Requiem*. But the *Messa per Rossini* lay largely forgotten until its rediscovery in Bologna in 1970 by the American Verdi scholar David Rosen. Eighteen years later, it received its first performance: a joint initiative by Pierluigi Petrobelli, director of the Verdi Institute in Parma, and Helmut Rilling, director of Stuttgart's Bachakademie.

The premiere, given in Stuttgart in September 1988, with Rilling directing his revered Gächinger Kantorei and five well-chosen soloists, was expertly recorded for Hänssler Classic by South German Radio. That remains available, in various more or less easy-to-acquire formats. And happily so, since I would be more confident commending this interesting choral curiosity to enquiring collectors in that Stuttgart performance than in the newer one from Milan.

Decca made the new recording in La Scala in November 2017, ahead of last year's 150th anniversary of Rossini's death: an admissible initiative under the terms of Verdi's somewhat prescriptive brief! The principal problem is that, where Rilling and his choir are specialists in the preparation and performance of sacred choral music from Bach to Britten, via Verdi and others too numerous to mention, the operatically inclined La Scala forces are not.

And it shows, not only in something like Carlo Coccia's *a cappella* setting of the 'Lacrimosa' but even in Verdi's 'Libera me' (disappointingly led by the rising Uruguayan-born star María José Siri), where you would expect the La Scala chorus to have some familiarity with

the music. I wonder, too, to what extent the Milan forces were fully engaged with the project. There are some memorable compositions here: Antonio Buzzolla's brooding Introitus, Carlo Pedrotti's superbly theatrical 'Tuba mirum', the high drama of Federico Ricci's 'Recordare'. But these all have more presence and atmosphere in Rilling's performance. Where the Stuttgart musicians are alert to the music's point and beauty, the Italians often seem merely dutiful. In all but two of the movements Chailly's tempos are brisker than Rilling's. This can be useful in the handful of contributions which, in one way or another, are frankly second-rate, but it is not so helpful elsewhere.

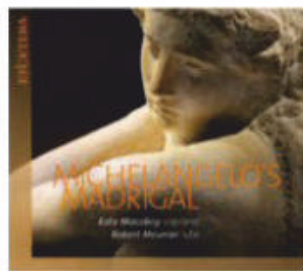
Chailly's beautifully understated account with tenor Giorgio Berrugi of Alessandro Nini's grossly over-inflated (not to say egotistical) 'Ingemisco' is preferable to James Wagner's all-guns-blazing Rilling account. But that is an exception. Elsewhere, the Stuttgart performance is generally the finer of the two in terms of engagement, style and technique. **Richard Osborne**

Comparative version:

Rilling (2/90[®]) (HANS) CD98 402

'Michelangelo's Madrigal'

Works for soprano and lute by **Cara, Dall'Aquila, Dalza, Francesco Da Milano, Pesenti, Sannazaro, Scotto and Tromboncino**
Kate Macoboy *sop* **Robert Meunier** *lute*
 Etcetera (E) KTC1623 (57' • DDD • T/t)



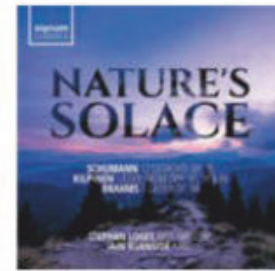
Though a standard combination in Italy at the beginning of the 16th century, voice and lute are not heard today as often as one might wish. Perhaps that's to do with the repertoire's strong links with improvisation, or it may reflect reluctance to tackle the Italian composers who worked alongside their more widely disseminated Franco-Flemish colleagues (both these points are mentioned in the notes to this recital). Be that as it may, the genre's most notable protagonists are represented here, regularly interspersed with short lute preludes and fantasias. It's a well-constructed programme, albeit a little on the short side. The link with Michelangelo, though present, is slender – just the one poetic text, 'Come harò dunque ardire', set by Tromboncino. Does such lovely music require a sales pitch?

The conception is so sympathetic that one can't help but wish the results were more satisfying. The key element to delivering these pieces successfully is conveyed in the

contemporary term *sprezzatura*, denoting an effortless virtuosity delivered with studied casualness. But the lute selections, though clean, seem unnecessarily cautious and lacking in the improvisatory feel that is surely essential. Kate Macoboy's timbre is most attractive but intonation is often imprecise, and phrasing and breath placement counterintuitive. A slightly faster tempo might have helped smooth over such details. The acoustic, relatively dry and very well captured, makes for a present and intimate recorded sound but it also means that there's nowhere to hide. This music's special quality is to treat melancholy with a light heart, yet without sounding twee. That this comes across despite the recital's shortcomings (or if you prefer, my reservations) may be reason enough to overlook them. **Fabrice Fitch**

'Nature's Solace'

Brahms Fünf Lieder, Op 94 Kilpinen Liederfolge, Op 97 - No 4, Ich frage dich; No 5, Allein. Herbst, Op 98 - No 7, Die Kindheit; No 8, Vergänglichkeit. Schlittenfahrt, Op 99 No 4 Schumann Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner, Op 35
Stephan Loges *bass-bar* **Iain Burnside** *pf*
 Signum (E) SIGCD554 (53' • DDD • T/t)



Stephan Loges's recent appearances on disc have been largely in oratorio and earlier Lieder (by Mendelssohn), but here he offers some substantial Lieder-singing in a programme recorded in two parts – Schumann's Kerner songs in autumn 2017; the Brahms and Kilpinen four and a half years earlier. He is a trustworthy guide, using the text intelligently and without exaggeration, and the voice is sturdy and reliable.

I mention the gap between recording sessions since to me Loges sounds a tad more tightly focused in the songs recorded earlier. This might also be due to the greater demands of Schumann's Op 35 cycle, which launches in with the turbulent 'Lust der Sturmnacht' and then calls for a steadiness of tone in the cantilena of 'Stirb, Lieb' und Freud' that Loges can't quite ideally manage. He has to push in the top notes of 'Stille Tränen', and elsewhere I miss the honeyed tone others bring to, say, 'Alte Laute'. This is a sensitive, touching account of this great cycle, with Iain Burnside offering fine piano-playing, but it's difficult not to recall other favourite recordings: the supreme poetry of Wolfgang Holzmair and Imogen Cooper, for example, or, for sheer vocal beauty, the young Andreas Schmidt with Rudolf Jansen (DG, 3/95 – nla).



Innocence and optimism: Anne Sofie von Otter, with longtime partner Bengt Forsberg on the organ, excels in varied repertoire

The coupling offers a great deal, though, not least in welcome appearances of a handful of songs by the 'Finnish Schubert', Yrjö Kilpinen (1892-1959). Though he remains compromised by questions about his political affiliations, as Natasha Loges acknowledges in the booklet, these settings of Hesse are often striking: a stern, almost cool musical language that occasionally – as in the tender 'Ich fragte dich' and the close of the memorable 'Vergänglichkeit' – melts to offer lyrical warmth. Loges and Burnside make a persuasive case.

They are similarly persuasive in Brahms's Op 94 Lieder, with Loges bringing impressive gravitas – of manner as well as voice – to 'Mit vierzig Jahren ist der Berg erstiegen', and a touching tenderness to 'Sapphische Ode'. **Hugo Shirley**

Schumann – selected comparison:

Holzmair, Cooper (5/02) (PHIL.) ➔ 462 610-2PH

'A Simple Song'

Bernstein Mass – A Simple Song **Copland**

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson – No 10, I've heard an organ talk sometimes **Durufié** Requiem, Op 9 – Pie Jesu **Ives** 114 Songs – No 42, Serenity **Liszt** Ave Maria III, S60 **Mahler** Symphony No 2, 'Resurrection' – Urlicht. Symphony No 3 – Es sungen drei Engel **F Martin** Requiem – Agnus Dei **Messiaen** Trois Mélodies **Pärt** Es sang vor langen Jahren. My heart's in the Highlands **Poulenc** Priez pour paix **Rodgers** The Sound of Music – Climb ev'ry mountain

R Strauss Morgen!, Op 27 No 4. Traum durch die Dämmerung, Op 29 No 1

Anne Sofie von Otter *mez* **Bengt Forsberg** *org* with **Sharon Bezaly** *fl* **Nils-Erik Sparf** *vn* **Ellen Nisbeth** *va* **Marie McLeod** *vc* **Margareta Nilsson** *hp*

Fabian Fredriksson *elec gtr*

BIS (F) BIS2327 (69' • DDD/DSD • T/t)

Played on the organ of St James's Church, Stockholm



The heart might justifiably sink at the prospect of a classical star releasing an album that concludes with 'Climb ev'ry mountain'. There's no need, though, when that artist is Anne Sofie von Otter: 'A Simple Song' turns out to be a thoughtful, even challenging recital, given extra colour by the fact that Bengt Forsberg, her longtime song partner, here swaps his piano for the organ of the Stockholm church where the young von Otter started singing as a teen.

And, as the booklet for this new album points out, the songs here are far from simple, even if there's a thread of straightforwardness, innocence or optimism running through many of them – summed up in the opening Bernstein track, performed with open-hearted sincerity. The constant blurring of lines between

the sacred and secular – a sense amplified, of course, by the organ accompaniments – brings especially rewarding results, with the unexpected juxtapositions of composers and modes allowing us to hear their music (and their associated personal philosophies) from revealing angles.

The organ gives an unexpected hint of the ecclesiastical to a melting 'Urlicht' and a moving account of Strauss's 'Traum durch die Dämmerung', while 'Climb ev'ry mountain' itself becomes a lot more than a rousing can-do motivational hymn. Performed thoughtfully and patiently, it is imbued – like everything on the album – with an extra dash of beauty and ambiguity. Some songs don't work quite so well, with the accompaniment to 'Es sungen drei Engel', despite Forsberg's imaginative registrations, sounding a tad galumphing at times, but the programming of secular Messiaen between sacred Durufié, Poulenc and Martin proves an inspired touch. The two Pärt numbers ('Es sang vor langen Jahren' in its original version with just violin and viola accompaniment) are especially moving.

BIS's engineers offer excellently balanced sound, and all the instrumentalists involved match the intelligence and thoughtfulness of von Otter's singing. This is a delightful, surprising and thought-provoking programme – difficult to classify, perhaps, but very easy to enjoy. **Hugo Shirley**

WHAT NEXT?

Do you have a favourite piece of music and want to explore further? Our monthly feature suggests some musical journeys that venture beyond the most familiar works, with some recommended versions. This month, **Mark Pullinger**'s point of departure is ...

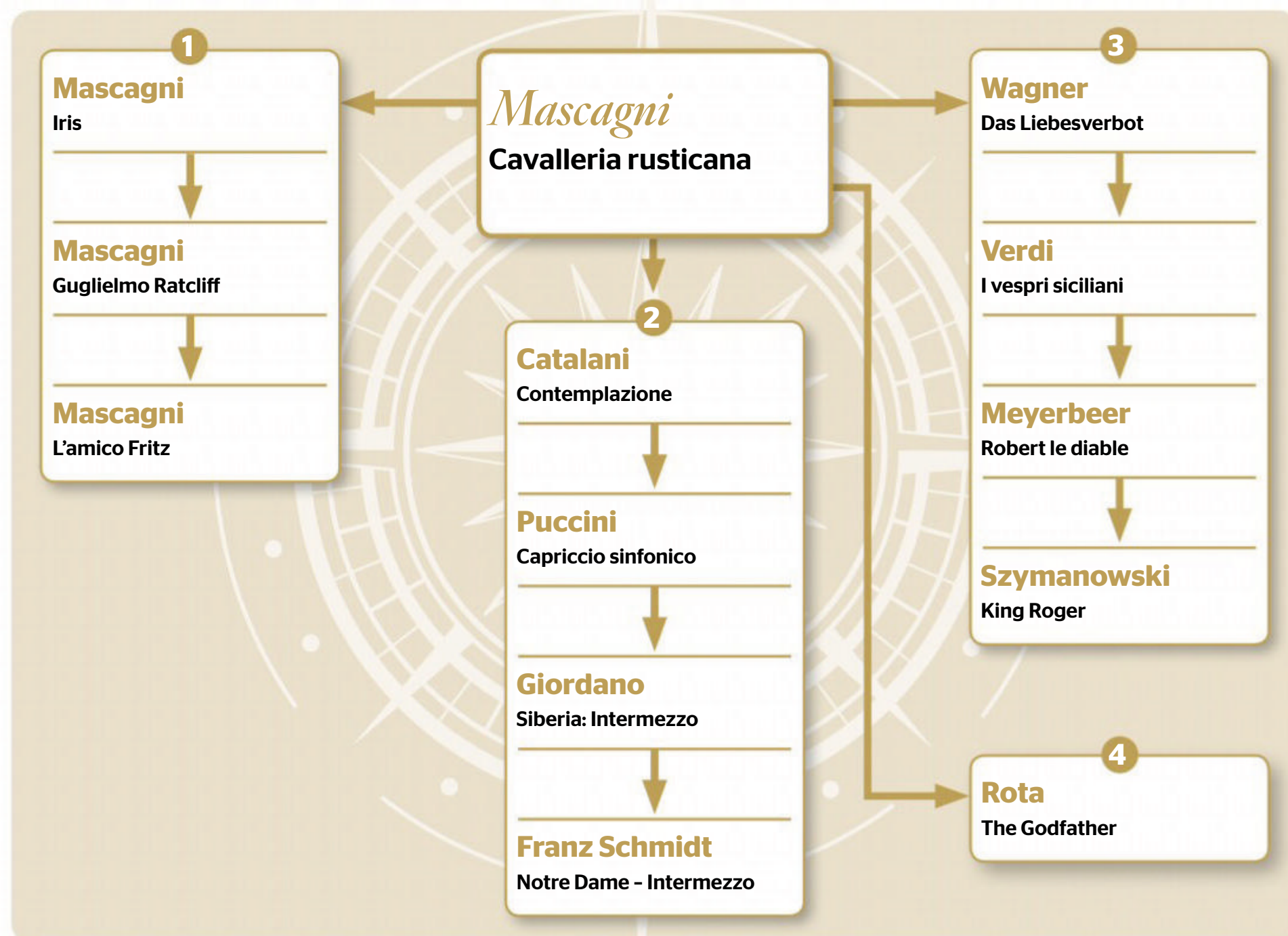
Cavalleria rusticana

Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* was an operatic winner from the very start. When he heard about a competition for young Italian composers by Milanese publisher Edoardo Sonzogno in 1888, there were only two months left until the closing date. His friend Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti wrote a libretto, adapting Giovanni Verga's play about high Sicilian passions at Eastertide ... and the rest is history. It romped home and was declared an instant hit – Mascagni took 40 curtain calls at the premiere. It was soon paired with Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and they've been joined at the hip as a double bill ever since. Mascagni

never repeated his success, although it wasn't for the want of trying.
● **Tebaldi; Björling; Bastianini; Maggio Musicale Fiorentino / Erede** (Decca, 4/59)

1 *More Mascagni*

Mascagni *Iris* (1898) Set in Japan, *Iris* shares several similarities with Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* ... except Mascagni got there first. It tells a tawdry tale: Iris, the daughter of a blind man is abducted by a rich young lord with the help of a brothel-keeper. Shamed,





Cavalleria rusticana: a palpable hit, right from the first performance

she eventually commits suicide by leaping into a sewer. Musically, it's no stinker, especially the glorious choral sunrise at the start.

● Domingo, Tokody, Pons; Munich Rad Orch / Patanè (Sony, 9/89)

Mascagni Guglielmo Ratcliff (1895) Although *Cav* was his breakthrough opera, it wasn't Mascagni's first. Based on a gothic tale, *Guglielmo Ratcliff* is terrific – a rough diamond, but worth hearing. Except you won't hear it often. The title role requires a tireless tenor who can cope with a high tessitura. Like *Cav*, it has a peach of an intermezzo.

● Wexford Festival Opera / Cilluffo (RTÉ Lyric, 2/17)

Mascagni L'amico Fritz (1891) After the red-blooded passions of *Cav*, *L'amico Fritz* is a charmer, a gentle operatic rom-com. A rich bachelor declares he'll never marry. Guess what happens next? The 'Cherry Duet' between Fritz and young Suzel is simply scrumptious.

● Freni; Pavarotti; Royal Opera House Orch / Gavazzeni (Warner, 7/69)

2 Opera composers in orchestral mode

Catalani Contemplazione (1878) Alfredo Catalani is most famous for his opera *La Wally* (where the heroine dies in an avalanche). *Contemplazione*, however, is a gorgeous little orchestral score, full of melancholy, with fervent outbursts from the string section.

● La Scala PO / Muti (Sony Classical, 9/98)

Puccini Capriccio sinfonico (1883) Puccini completed his studies at the Milan Conservatory in 1883 with his *Capriccio sinfonico*. It's

a light-hearted, tuneful work. About four minutes in, a familiar theme appears – yes, Puccini later recycled the motif as the opening bars of *La bohème*, but here it quickly morphs into a waltz!

● La Scala PO / Muti (Sony Classical, 9/98)

Giordano Siberia - Intermezzo (1903) *Andrea Chénier* is easily Giordano's most famous opera, but don't dismiss the underrated *Siberia* for *verismo* thrills. The Act 2 prelude shivers, woodwinds intoning the *Song of the Volga Boatmen* as the prisoners trudge their way through the snow, before the strings howl their icy response.

● La Scala PO / Chailly (Decca, 4/17)

Schmidt Notre Dame - Intermezzo (1914) *Notre Dame*, loosely based on Victor Hugo's famous *Hunchback*, is an even rarer visitor to the stage than *La Wally*. But its Intermezzo is a stunner, so much so that Herbert von Karajan recorded it twice. Have the Berlin Philharmonic strings ever swooned and sighed so theatrically? Prepare to join them!

● Berlin PO / Karajan (Warner, 1/82)

3 Set in Sicily

Wagner Das Liebesverbot (1836) Far from the *verismo* landscape of *Cav* – and from the epic scale of *The Ring* – Wagner's *Das Liebesverbot* is an early comedy, based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. If you didn't know better, you'd think the overture, with its witty piccolo and frivolous castanets, was composed by Rossini. (Perhaps that's why I secretly enjoy it ...)

● Frankfurt Opera / Weigle (Oehms, A/13)

Verdi I vespri siciliani (1855) Set in late 13th-century Sicily, Verdi's opera tells the tale of the Sicilian uprising against the ruling French ... not, perhaps, an auspicious subject if you're composing for the Paris Opéra! It exists in two versions – French and Italian – and contains great music for all four main characters, particularly the bass role of Procida.

● Domingo; Milnes; Arroyo; Raimondi; New Philh / Levine (RCA, 9/88)

Meyerbeer Robert le diable (1831) Any opera with a ballet of dead nuns has to be worth investigating! Set in Palermo, Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* deals with the devil's attempt to win Robert's soul. Our tenor is saved by his half-sister, Alice, and Isabelle, Princess of Sicily.

● Hymel; Giannattasio; Ciofi; Opera di Salerno / Oren (Brilliant)

Szymanowski King Roger (1926) Szymanowski called *King Roger* 'a Sicilian drama'. It's an elusive piece, charting the enlightenment of a Christian king by a young pagan shepherd. Roxana's aria, with its ethereal melismas, is the closest the opera has to a 'hit number'.

● Hampson; Szmytka; CBSO / Rattle (Warner, 9/99)

4 An offer you can't refuse

Rota The Godfather (1972) Think of Sicily on film and the Mafia of Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy can never be far away. In the third episode, the Corleones visit Palermo's Teatro Massimo to watch Anthony make his operatic debut ... in *Cavalleria rusticana*, of course. Anyone who argues that Nino Rota's score is anything less than magnificent gets to sleep with the fishes ...

● La Scala PO / Muti (Sony Classical, 4/98)

Available to stream at Qobuz, Apple Music and Spotify

Opera



Tim Ashley explores the early genesis of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*:

'Laurent Pillot conducts with superb energy, and there's elegant playing from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 89**



Richard Wigmore welcomes Cecilia Bartoli's return to Vivaldi:

'Bartoli lives dangerously, unfolding reams of don't-mess-with-me coloratura – thrilling or exhausting, according to taste' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 93**

Berg

Wozzeck

Christopher Maltman *bar* Wozzeck
Eva-Maria Westbroek *sop* Marie
Frank van Aken *ten* Drum Major
Jason Bridges *ten* Andres
Marcel Beekman *ten* Captain/Idiot
Sir Willard White *bass-bar* Doctor
Scott Wilde *bass* Apprentice I
Morschi Franz *ten* Apprentice II
Ursula Hesse von den Steinen *mez* Margret
New Amsterdam Children's Choir; Chorus of Dutch National Opera; Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra / Marc Albrecht

Stage director **Krzysztof Warlikowski**

Video director **François Roussillon**

Naxos (DVD) 2 110582; (Blu-ray) NBD0081V
 (107' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD5.0, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live at Dutch National Opera & Ballet, Amsterdam, March 23, April 6, 2017

Includes synopsis



Without matching the tight ensemble or aiming for the taut pacing of Teodor Currentzis at the Bolshoi, Marc Albrecht

embeds *Wozzeck* within a lineage of lyrically sprung, dance-driven operas from Weber's *Oberon* to *Der Rosenkavalier*, taking in Lortzing and *Die Fledermaus* along the way. Richly Mahlerian strings and brass set the tone for even the most edgy and 'contemporary' scenes in the tavern and between Wozzeck's trio of tormentors. All of whom, it must be said, are sung with some style, especially the astonishingly secure Captain of Marcel Beekman and the engagingly sinister comic turn of Willard White as the Doctor.

Still more do the two central characters establish their own places within both Albrecht's and director Warlikowski's designs for the piece. Local favourite Eva-Maria Westbroek carries easily over Berg's full orchestra as a Wagnerian tart with a heart in the tradition of Hildegard Behrens's Marie for Abbado rather than

Lulu archetypes such as Evelyn Lear for Böhm. Following the likes of Fischer-Dieskau and Goerne, Christopher Maltman is another Wozzeck whose experience on the Lieder platform draws out a three-dimensional portrait of Schubertian pathos and focus: as in the wanderer of *Winterreise*, everything seems to happen to and around him even while he holds the stage.

Even were it not among the most beautifully played and sung accounts on record and film, this *Wozzeck* would command attention for Krzysztof Warlikowski's staging, which is a further refinement of his production for the Polish premiere of the work as recently as 2005. The director returns to the real-life murder once reported in a newspaper which Büchner picked up, and to Woyzeck's occupation as a barber, to fashion a Second-Viennese *Sweeney Todd*. Clean lines and a minimum of telling props in Małgorzata Szczęśniak's designs leave singers and dancers to tell the story, though the character most often central to the drama is mute and mostly still: Marie's child, and here most certainly Wozzeck's too, in a performance of devastating poise by Jacob Jutte. The overwhelming impression left is not of cruelty but of compassion. **Peter Quanttrill**

Bizet

Carmen

Grace Bumbry *mez* Carmen
Jon Vickers *ten* Don José
Justino Díaz *bass-bar* Escamillo
Mirella Freni *sop* Micaëla
Oliviera Miljaković *sop* Frasquita
Julia Hamari *mez* Mercédès
John van Kesteren *ten* Dancairo
Milen Paunov *ten* Remendado
Anton Diakov *bass* Zuniga
Robert Kerns *bar* Morales
Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra / Herbert von Karajan
 Orfeo (M) ③ C866 183D (162' • ADD)
 Recorded live at the Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, July 29, 1967
 Includes synopsis



In some ways this is a double historical release – a performance

from over 50 years ago and a preservation of a now (thankfully) antiquated way of performing a repertoire favourite. Here is *Carmen* as it once nearly always was: without a touch of musicological research or respect, swollen up to Festival Grand Opera status with the use of the excruciatingly banal Guiraud recitatives (their only purpose to avoid, for the cast, the presumed highwire walk of speaking dialogue), the addition of further 'dance music' in the Tavern scene of Act 2 (some of it, the *L'arlésienne* Farandole, not even from the same work) and a generally brash, attention-seeking style of performance light years away from its subtle *opéra comique* starting point.

This *Carmen* show – I think that's the *mot juste* – has already been issued as a studio recording on DVD and there are, in fairness, plus points that make a closer listen to a live version with just sound not a complete waste of time. There's the curiosity value of hearing a *monstre sacré* performed at (mostly) a high level of musical achievement, although occasionally – as in the Farandole – we hear the results of quickly remembered routine rather than recent rehearsal. There's some nimble playing by the orchestra, although Karajan's treatment of every number as an event in its own right independent of dramatic meaning (rather like an old-fashioned approach to a musical) can get in the way of that.

There's some extremely potent singing from three of the leads (Bumbry, Vickers and Freni's Micaëla), not least from Bumbry with a subtle range of dynamics that truly suggests both the almost obligatory compliment to a diva in this opera ('sexy') and a real sense of ironic humour. Vickers is extraordinarily passionate too although, as with his Grimes, he pulls the musical line around



Christopher Maltman (left) gives a three-dimensional portrait of Wozzeck in Krzysztof Warlikowski's magnificent staging

a lot for expressive purposes (and Karajan is most accommodating here, even in an endless wait for José's final confession). *Nota bene*: if you are as averse to stage noise on record as some of our reviewers used to be, turn immediately to disc 1 track 4, where it sounds like it's the incoming guard detail rather than Micaëla's plaits that are 'tombant'. It also sounds as if the crowd celebrations have been boosted with taped cheering – *un peu de trop*?

If you want to indulge naughtily in a noisy Grand Opera *Carmen*, Karajan's RCA recording with Price and Corelli is a better bet. Orfeo's release remains a curio, if a valuable historical document in terms of style. **Mike Ashman**

Selected comparison:

Karajan (9/64^R) (RCA) 74321 25279-2

Gaveaux

Léonore

Kimy Mc Laren *sop* Léonore/Fidélío
Jean-Michel Richer *ten* Florestan
Tomislav Lavoie *bass* Roc
Pascale Beaudin *sop* Marceline
Dominique Côté *bar* Pizare
Kevin Geddes *ten* Jacquino
Alexandre Sylvestre *bass-bar* Dom Fernand
Chorus and Orchestra of Opera Lafayette / Ryan Brown

Stage director **Oriol Tomas**

Video director **Jason Starr**

Naxos (E) DVD 2 110591; (E) Blu-ray NBD0085V

(82' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live at the Gerald W Lynch Theater, John Jay College, New York, February 23, 2017



When reading the programme at a performance of *Fidelio*, or inspecting a CD or DVD booklet, have you ever wondered what lay behind the last name in the usual credit of 'Libretto by Joseph Sonnleithner and Stephan von Breuning, after Jean-Nicolas Bouilly?' No, I thought not. Trained as a lawyer, Bouilly was the author or co-author of several librettos, including *Les deux journées* for Cherubini (1800). *Léonore*, which he claimed to be based on true events of which he had personal knowledge, was staged in Paris in 1798.

And what of the composer? Pierre Gaveaux (1760-1825) was a professional singer, accomplished enough to sing Florestan in his own opera. *Léonore* is an *opéra comique*, that is to say an opera with spoken dialogue between the musical

numbers; and provided you try to put *Fidelio* out of your mind you will enjoy this performance from New York. Easier said than done, as Beethoven's librettists followed Bouilly closely. The resemblance, not surprisingly, is more to Beethoven's first version of 1805 (now known, confusingly, as *Leonore*) than to the *Fidelio* of 1814. Thus, unlike *Fidelio*, the opera opens with the solo for Marceline, followed by the duet with Jacquino, and includes the duet for Marceline and Léonore that became Beethoven's 'Um in der Ehe froh zu leben'. And, as in 1805, the arrival of Dom Fernand and the final jubilation take place in Florestan's subterranean cell.

If Bouilly's stagecraft has a fault, it is that there's too much dialogue – Léonore's detailed explanation when confronting Pizare with the pistol lowers the dramatic temperature – and the scene where Pizare bribes Roc takes place offstage. Gaveaux's music, charming in the domestic scenes, attains real depth in the ominous introduction to Act 2. And there are telling moments, such as the minor-key ending of the major-key trio in the dungeon. Oriol Tomas's production is straightforward, with a simple set and period costumes by Laurence Mongeau. The cast speaks the



Marina Rebeka's new album, presenting the best-known and most dramatic Bel Canto, based on the composers' original manuscripts.

Scenes from Norma, Il Pirata, Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, and La Vestale.

This album combines Marina Rebeka's thrilling singing, dramatic Bel Canto music based on original manuscripts, and Jader Bignamini's nuanced conducting of the Teatro Massimo di Palermo Orchestra and Chorus.

With SPIRITO, Marina Rebeka enchants us once again with her distinctive voice and heartfelt interpretation. Raising the bar after her acclaimed album "Amor Fatale", she has handpicked some of the most challenging pieces of the dramatic Bel Canto repertoire and shed a refreshing light on these timeless masterpieces.

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 9TH
on all Digital Platforms and Retail Stores

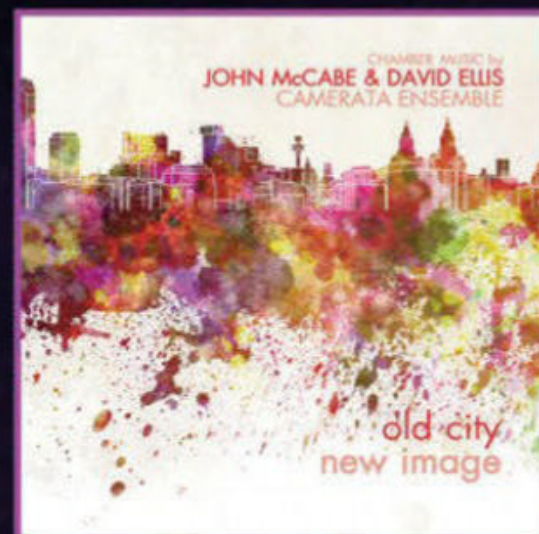
PRIMA
CLASSIC
www.primaclassic.com

The Orchard **proper**
Digital and Physical Distribution

Catalog PRIMA001

JOHN McCABE

80th BIRTHDAY YEAR 2019

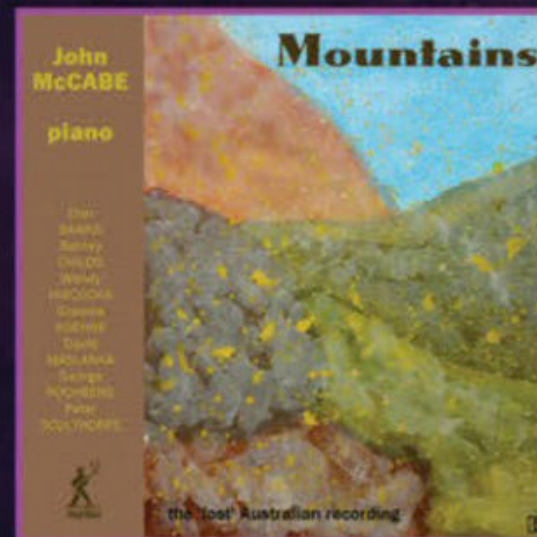


OLD CITY NEW IMAGE

Two significant chamber works, the String Trio (1965) and Second String Quartet (1972), plus two fine works by David Ellis: his own String Trio and First String Quartet. A vibrant recording by the Manchester Camerata Ensemble, re-released with grateful thanks to

Campion Cameo.

Prima Facie PFCD 096



MOUNTAINS

John McCabe plays

Australian and American Piano Music, by
Sculthorpe, Hiscocks, Maslanka, Banks, Koehne,
Rochberg and Childs.

A major piano CD by John McCabe,
released for the first time - the
'Lost Australian Recording'.

Showing typically generous support of music by
other composers, all known to him, and with two of
the works written for him, this valuable archive was
recorded in 1985 and never issued. Now
miraculously re-found and expertly re-mastered.

Divine Art/Metier MSV 28585



Elegantly worn Viennese style: Vincent Schirmacher and Miriam Portmann star in Kálmán's *Kaiserin Josephine* at the Bad Ischl Léhar Festival – see review on page 88

dialogue well, though Léonore's reaction to Roc's mentioning that the unknown prisoner – Florestan – has been incarcerated for two years borders on the casual.

Opera Lafayette is based in Washington DC but all the singers are Canadian. Kimy Mc Laren makes a believable Léonore/Fidélio: forthright, valiant, tender in the dungeon scene, and with bright, fearless top notes. Jean-Michel Richer as Florestan, improbably well groomed, is just as credible: he is particularly impressive when begging Roc for help. Without a big aria – no 'Ha! Welch ein Augenblick!' for him – Pizare is, so to speak, even more one-dimensional than Beethoven's Don Pizarro, but Dominique Côté manages to be both threatening and sly; while Tomislav Lavoie points up the dilemma of Roc, the loving father prepared to connive at Pizare's plan to murder Florestan. Of the minor characters, Pascale Beaudin is an enchanting Marceline, turning her aria into a fandango. The high tenor line gives the Prisoners' Chorus a particularly wistful air. The orchestra under Ryan Brown play with spirit. This is an enterprising and rewarding production, well worth 82 minutes of your time. **Richard Lawrence**

Handel

Serse

Franco Fagioli *countertenor* Serse

Inga Kalna *sop* Romilda

Vivica Genaux *mez* Arsamene

Delphine Galou *contr* Amastre

Francesca Aspromonte *sop* Atalanta

Biagio Pizzuti *bar* Elviro

Andrea Mastroni *bass* Ariodate

Cantica Symphonia; Il Pomo d'Oro /

Maxim Emelyanychev

DG (M) ③ 483 5784GH3 (170' • DDD)

Includes synopsis, libretto and translation



By all accounts the castrato Caffarelli outdid even his fellow-falsettist Senesino in boorish disregard for colleagues and audiences. Lateness and non-appearance in rehearsals and performances were woven into his DNA. Yet when he did deign to appear, all were agreed on his consummate artistry, whether spinning a liquid *cantabile* or tossing off roulades with a finesse and precision to rival any castrato of the day, Farinelli included. Handel fashioned the title-role in *Serse* to Caffarelli's vocal and expressive gifts, above all in the central aria

'Se bramate' that alternates vehement coloratura with sudden stabs of anguish. Caffarelli's range extended easily up to top A, hence the casting of female mezzos in most modern stagings and all previous recordings. Enter the countertenor-cum-soprano Franco Fagioli, whose triumphant performance of the lovelorn, capricious king rightly dominates this new set, recorded at sessions at the Villa San Fermo in Lonigo.

It's speculation, of course. But I'd guess that a voice like Franco Fagioli's, spanning three octaves, comes as close as we can get today to the mingled brilliance, suppleness and power of the great castrati in their pomp. He immediately displays the rounded sweetness of his tone – more vibrantly feminine than others of his ilk – in *Serse*'s 'Ombrai mai fu', where his superb breath control enables him to phrase in broad, seamless spans. Later in an opera that veers unpredictably between comedy and near-tragedy, Fagioli catches all of the preening monarch's absurdity and dangerous wilfulness without compromising vocal quality. 'Se bramate' is a properly thrilling tour de force, spurred on by the combustible strings of *Il Pomo d'Oro*, whose eagerly responsive, high-octane playing underpins the whole

performance. Then, when Serse finally throws his toys out of the pram and invokes the Furies, Fagioli deploys the full extent of his freakish vocal range, down to a resonant baritone, in a spectacularly over-the-top performance. Just occasionally – say in the juddering added trills in the *da capo* of ‘Più che penso’ – you might question Fagioli’s taste in ornamentation. And his rich tone is not always conducive to verbal clarity. But few if any falsettists today could match his combination of temperament and vocal glamour in this notoriously taxing part.

While Fagioli will be the prime draw for many, the rest of the cast easily hold their own in vocal lustre and dramatic immediacy. As in the 1738 London premiere, the role of Serse’s more amenable brother Arsamene is taken by a mezzo-soprano. With her flaming intensity of voice and manner, Vivica Genaux makes him more positive than usual, avoiding the trap of mooning passivity in the slow arias and erupting thrillingly in ‘Sì, la voglio’, where Arsamene finally locates his inner alpha male. The two sisters are aptly contrasted. Inga Kalna, as Romilda, is darkly sensuous in timbre yet with a nice line in teasing playfulness, while Francesca Aspromonte’s blithe, fresh-toned Atalanta is keenly alive to the moments of tenderness, even melancholy, that add depth to the character. This Atalanta is no mere flirt. Aspromonte also gives an object lesson in the pointing and colouring of the Italian text.

With her naturally incisive, ‘masculine’ timbre, Delphine Galou cuts a very human figure as Serse’s abandoned betrothed Amastre. She suggests more hurt than anger in the tortuous ‘Anima infida’ and distils an emollient tenderness in a beautifully floated ‘Cagion son io’ – Amastre’s cathartic moment. Both basses, too, are splendid: Biagio Pizzutti balancing slapstick and firm tone as the comic servant Elviro, and Andrea Mastroni, a ripe-voiced *basso cantante*, impressing in the sturdy, no-nonsense arias Handel wrote for Serse’s dutiful general Ariodate. Both these native Italian singers rival Francesca Aspromonte in their vivid enunciation.

The one serious competitor among rival CD versions of *Serse* is the excellent Chandos recording directed by Christian Curnyn. To over-simplify, Curnyn and his cast, led by Anna Stéphany’s glowing-toned Serse, place a premium on elegance and lightness of touch without neglecting the opera’s serious undertones. Maxim Emelyanychev, Fagioli and co live more urgently – though not necessarily more speedily – in a performance that combines

vocal allure with a coruscating theatricality, not least in the quickfire *secco* dialogues. Whoever said Baroque ‘dry’ recitative was boring? **Richard Wigmore**

Selected comparison:

Curnyn (9/13) (CHAN) CHAN0797

Kálmán

Kaiserin Josephine

Vincent Schirrmacher *ten* Napoleon Bonaparte
Miriam Portmann *sop* Josephine Beauharnais
Constantin Zeilner *sng* Eugen Beauharnais
Paul Schmitzberger *ten* Paul Barras
Alois Walchshofer *bar* Talleyrand
August Schram *ten* Hippolyte Charles
Dorli Buchinger *sng* Herzogin von Aiguillon
Adelheid Brandstetter *sop* Therese Tallien
Theresa Grabner *sop* Juliette
Roman Martin *ten* Corporal Bernard
Steven Scheschareg *bar* General Berthier
Birgit Stöckler *sop* Marion
Chorus of the Bad Ischl Lehár Festival; Franz Lehár Orchestra / Marius Burkert
 CPO © ② CPO555 136-2 (146' • DDD)

Includes synopsis



If you wanted to place a final full-stop to the ‘silver age’ of Viennese operetta, you could

do worse than choose Emmerich Kálmán’s 1936 historical drama *Kaiserin Josephine*, his last major opening before going into exile in the USA. It was premiered in Zurich; and while Anglophone listeners might snigger at the idea of Napoleon Bonaparte as a romantic lead, there’s something undeniably touching about this bittersweet romance, which ends with an imperial coronation.

So far as I can tell this is its first complete recording. The booklet suggests that Kálmán was trying to emulate Lehár’s great Richard Tauber vehicles of the late 1920s, and musically the piece centres almost entirely on luscious solo showstoppers for the two leads, Napoleon and Josephine, interspersed with extended, highly effective ensemble finales for most of the operetta’s eight scenes. Kálmán doesn’t quite hit the melodic heights of *Gräfin Mariza* or *Die Csárdásfürstin* but I can’t imagine many singers would turn their noses up at numbers like Napoleon’s ‘Du bist die Frau’ and ‘Schön ist der Tag’ or Josephine’s big opening waltz-song ‘Schöne Marquise, arme Marquise’.

Those two central roles are of critical importance, and Miriam Portmann makes a suitably regal Josephine; a rich, luxurious soprano whose voice tightens only slightly in the bigger climaxes. But really stylish

operetta tenors are scarcer these days than good Siegfrieds. In a role that really needs a Beczala, Vincent Schirrmacher as Napoleon is a little colourless, his phrasing choppy and sometimes laboured, although by scene 6’s ‘Schön ist der Tag’ he’s sounding altogether more impressive. Theresa Grabner (Juliette) and Roman Martin (Bernard) are a perfectly bright and likeable pair in the more-than-usually insignificant comic subplot, though Martin barks a bit in his one solo number.

But what you do get here in luxurious profusion is the sense of ensemble and elegantly worn Viennese style that’s become a trademark of the Bad Ischl Lehár Festival. With Marius Burkert in the pit we’ve come to expect orchestral playing of unusual warmth and finesse and that’s certainly the case here: it sparkles, glows and swings, the phrasing is loving without being indulgent and Kálmán’s little dashes of jazz-age pizzazz (the score includes banjo, xylophone and sax) catch the light but never sound like gimmicks. The choral singing is focused and full, and with the spoken dialogue included you get a real sense of a live theatrical performance.

But (and at the risk of sounding like a scuffed CD) there’s no libretto or translation, the booklet note reads like an MA thesis that’s been spat out by Google Translate and the extremely perfunctory plot summary is almost impossible to match to the track-listing. For non-German speakers, at least half of the 22 listed characters are completely unidentifiable. Your best bet is to try and get hold of Mark Lubbock’s *Complete Book of Light Opera*, which has a comprehensive synopsis. Meanwhile, enjoy Kálmán’s score and the Bad Ischl company’s engaging performance, and dream of a day when record labels present landmark recordings of neglected operettas with the care they deserve. **Richard Bratby**

Liszt

Sardanapalo^a. Mazeppa, S100

^a**Joyce El-Khoury** *sop* Mirra

^a**Airam Hernández** *ten* Sardanapalo

^a**Oleksandr Pushniak** *bass-bar* Beleso

^a**Ladies’ Chorus of the German National Theatre, Weimar; Weimar Staatskapelle / Kirill Karabits**

Audite © AUDITE97 764 (67' • DDD)

Includes synopsis; libretto available from audite.de/97764



An immensely important issue, this is the first recording of the performing edition

by British musicologist David Trippett of *Sardanapalo*, the only projected opera by the mature Liszt of which substantial material survives. Its genesis remains to some extent shrouded in mystery. Byron's 1821 play *Sardanapalus*, about the sensualist Assyrian king who immolated himself and his mistress after failing to quell an insurrection, was among the subjects that Liszt was contemplating, as early as 1842, to mark his return to opera, his only previous work in the genre being the juvenile *Don Sanche* of 1825. Why he chose *Sardanapalo* over, among others, Byron's *Corsair* and an opera about Spartacus, is seemingly unknown. We also have scant information about *Sardanapalo*'s librettist, an unnamed Italian poet suggested by the Princess Cristina Belgiojoso after attempts failed to procure a text from the French playwright Félicien Mallefille. Nor has the full libretto survived: the only extant portions are those to be found in the manuscript.

Liszt seemingly began composition early in 1850 and was still working on the score in the winter of 1851-52. At some point shortly afterwards, however, he abandoned the opera, probably because his librettist was either unable or unwilling to undertake revisions to the second and third acts. The manuscript itself, meanwhile, though familiar to Liszt scholars, was long deemed too fragmentary for reconstruction. Trippett's painstaking research, however, revealed that in essence what we possess is a draft piano-vocal score of the complete first act, albeit with some key signatures omitted and a handful of gaps in the accompaniment; there are also a number of cues for orchestration, which Liszt apparently intended to entrust to his assistant Joachim Raff. Trippett consequently decided there was 'just sufficient' to undertake a performing version, and his edition caused something of a stir when it was first heard in Weimar last August, conducted by Kirill Karabits, with the cast we have here.

It is indeed extraordinary and in some respects unique. Commentators familiar with the manuscript have often dubbed it 'Meyerbeerian'. The opera might better, however, be described as through-composed *bel canto*, at times echoing Bellini, at others pre-empting 1860s Verdi (*Forza* in particular comes to mind), though the melodic contours and chromatic harmony are unmistakably Liszt's own. Dramatically straightforward and uncluttered, it falls into four distinct sections: an introductory chorus for Sardanapalo's many concubines; a colossal scena for Mirra, the king's slave-girl mistress; a love duet for the central couple; and a final trio in which Mirra and the Chaldean soothsayer Beleso attempt to persuade the unwilling king to go into battle after news of the insurrection breaks. Though the opening chorus repeats its material once too often, the rest of the act is beautifully shaped, while Liszt's fluid treatment of *bel canto* structures – blurring boundaries between recitative, aria and arioso in a quest for psychological veracity – reveals an assured musical dramatist at work.

He makes no concessions to his singers, though, and his vocal writing is taxing in the extreme. Joyce El-Khoury is pushed almost to her limits in Mirra's scena, with its big declamatory recitatives, interrupted cavatina (it fragments as mounting desire for her captor obliterates memories of a life once lived in freedom) and vast closing cabaletta. Her dramatic commitment is never in doubt, though, and there's a ravishing passage later on when she pleads with the king to put aside his aversion to military conflict, her voice soaring sensually and ecstatically over rippling harp arpeggios. Airam Hernández sounds noble and ardent in the title-role, wooing El-Khoury with fierce insistence and responding to Oleksandr Pushniak's stentorian Beleso with assertive dignity.

The choral singing is consistently strong, the playing terrific, and Karabits conducts with extraordinary passion. Trippett has carefully modelled his orchestration on Liszt's works of the early 1850s, and it sounds unquestionably authentic when placed beside the exhilarating performance of *Mazeppa* that forms its companion piece. Throughout there's a real sense of excitement at the discovery and restoration of a fine work by one of the most inventive of composers. You end up wishing that Liszt had somehow incorporated operatic composition into his extraordinary career, and wondering what the course of musical history might have been if he had. **Tim Ashley**

Mozart

Così fan tutte

Nazan Fikret *sop* Fiordiligi
Héloïse Mas *mez* Dorabella
Hamida Kristoffersen *sop* Despina
Alexander Sprague *ten* Ferrando
Biagio Pizzuti *bar* Guglielmo
Francesco Vultaggio *bar* Don Alfonso

European Opera Centre; Royal Liverpool

Philharmonic Orchestra / Laurent Pillot

Rubicon Ⓢ ② RCD1026 (148' • DDD)

Recorded live at St George's Concert Room, Liverpool, July 9, 11 & 13, 2014

Includes synopsis; libretto and translation available from rubiconclassics.com



This is *Così fan tutte* but not quite as we know it. Described as 'Mozart's original

thoughts recreated and recorded for the first time', it derives from performances given by the European Opera Centre in Liverpool in 2014, using an edition by the musicologist Ian Woodfield, who, while researching the autograph score for a study of the opera's compositional history, was

E. GUTZWILLER & C^{IE}

PRIVATE BANKERS SINCE 1886

BASEL - GENEVA - ZURICH

WWW.GUTZWILLER.CH +41 61 205 21 00

PROUD PARTNER OF

laCetra

Barockorchester & Vokalensemble Basel

Andrea Marcon, Artistic Director



audite

First recording:

Franz Liszt's opera **SARDANAPALO**

(ed. & orch. by David Trippett)

Joyce El-Khoury
Airam Hernández
Oleksandr Pushniak
Staatskapelle Weimar
Kirill Karabits



trailer on **YouTube**

HD-DOWNLOADS
stereo & surround
available at audite.de

audite.de/97764 (CD)



"... a thrilling piece of music, alive, vibrant, and new – and only 170 years old." *Opera Canada*

"... absolutely fascinating ... An eminent discovery. What a pity Liszt didn't continue along this path." *Die Welt*

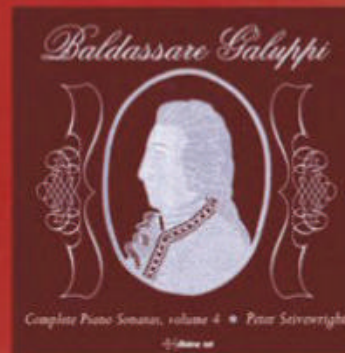
audite

www.audite.de

Distributor UK:
RSK Entertainment

DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP
INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL

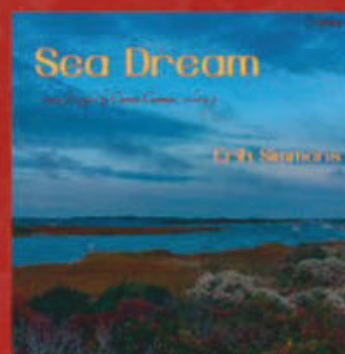
New Releases



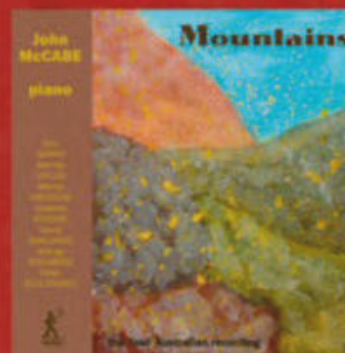
GALUPPI: PIANO SONATAS, VOL. 4
PETER SEIVEWRIGHT
Works ranging from basic baroque style to a Romanticism prescient of Schumann
Divine Art dda 25103



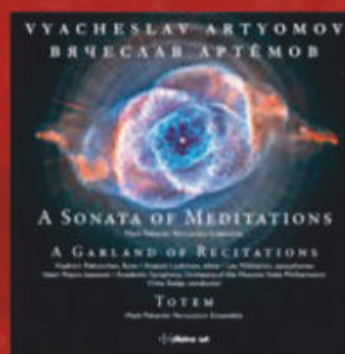
GERSHWIN AND RAVEL: MUSIC FOR PIANO DUO
GOLDSTONE & CLEMMOW
A superb programme of music inspired by jazz and popular idioms
Divine Art dda 25055



'SEA DREAM' – ORGAN MUSIC BY CARSON COOMAN, VOL 9
ERIK SIMMONS
Non-liturgical works, including the fine Organ Symphony No. 2
Divine Art dda 25181



'MOUNTAINS' – THE 'LOST' AUSTRALIAN RECORDING
JOHN McCABE
Contemporary piano music, in what is likely the last 'new' recording from the accomplished pianist
Métier msv 28585



ARTYOMOV: 'A SONATA OF MEDITATIONS', etc
VARIOUS ARTISTS
The title percussion work and 'Totem', with the orchestral piece 'A Garland of Recitations'
Divine Art dda 25174

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
Available at all good dealers and in both CD and HD, FLAC and mp3 download formats direct from

www.divineartrecords.com

Distribution in the UK by



Worldwide distribution by





Così fan tutte not quite as we know it: a new recording from Liverpool reveals an early version with a rather differently nuanced narrative

struck by a number of anomalies within it. Multiple changes to pronouns in the text – and indeed the omission of some pronouns altogether, as if waiting for clarification of who might be referring to whom – led him to deduce that Mozart and da Ponte's initial scheme for *Così* differed somewhat from its final version: Ferrando was originally paired with Fiordiligi, Guglielmo with Dorabella; and after the men have donned their disguises, each was to seduce his own lover rather than the other's. The recording consequently aims at giving us *Così* as it might have been had the pairings and narrative not been changed.

In practice, this means leaving Act 1 largely unaltered apart from some verbal tweaking, though Guglielmo is given his alternative aria 'Rivolgete a me lo sguardo' instead of his more familiar 'Non siate ritrosi'. Considerable adjustment is required, however, to bring Act 2 into line with Woodfield's findings. Since the sexual rivalry that develops between the two men is now less in evidence, Ferrando loses 'Tradito, schernito', while Guglielmo's bitter 'Donne mie, la fate a tanti' is both reallocated to Don Alfonso and relocated earlier in the act. Dorabella's 'È amore un ladroncello' has been cut, as, more questionably, has Despina's 'Una donna a quindici anni'. Even more detrimental,

however, is the decision to give the work without choruses for reasons that remain unclear: we consequently lose both 'Bella vita militar' and the Act 2 Serenade, while the excisions in the Act 2 finale come dangerously close to pulling the whole scene out of shape.

The performance itself is excellent. Laurent Pillot conducts with superb energy and grace, and there's some elegant playing from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, whose woodwind sound particularly lovely here. The student ensemble cast is similarly strong, though Alexander Sprague's introverted Ferrando has some effortful moments in his upper registers. Nazan Fikret's silver-toned Fiordiligi and Héloïse Mas's altogether more sensual Dorabella sound good together in their duets, and Fikret's 'Come scoglio' is technically secure and most beautifully done. Francesco Vultaggio makes a brusque Don Alfonso opposite Hamida Kristoffersen's ironic, worldly wise Despina. Best of all, perhaps, is Biagio Pizzuti's Guglielmo, his voice warm and mature, his characterisation wonderfully subtle: he's as good as, if not better than, many big-name singers who have recorded the role.

It leaves you with mixed feelings, however. Woodfield's musicological findings are persuasive, and unquestionably

shed new light on *Così*'s genesis. And it is, of course, fascinating to hear the work as it may originally have been planned. Leaving the seductions uncrossed, however, inevitably means that we lose much of the sadness, irony and psychological perception that make the standard score such a complex and troubling experience. Anyone who cares about *Così* should hear this. But in the final analysis, it reminds us that it was Mozart and da Ponte's eventual revisions that resulted in the masterpiece that affects us so deeply today. **Tim Ashley**

Purcell

King Arthur

Sophie Junker *sop*..... Cupid/Honour
Zsuzsi Tóth *sop* Shepherdess/Siren/Nymph/Venus
Stefanie True *sop*.....
 Priestess/Shepherdess/Syren/She
Caroline Weynants *sop*..... Philidel/Nymph/Nereid
Olivier Berten *bar*..... Tenor/Comus
Robert Buckland *ten*.....
 Second Saxon Priest/British Warrior/Peasant
Daniel Elgersma *counterten*..... Nymph
Marcus Farnsworth *bar*..... Grimbald/Aeolus/He
David Feldman *counterten*..... Peasant
Jan Kullmann *counterten*..... Priestess/Man
David Lee *counterten*..... Priestess/Man
Sebastian Myrus *bar*..... First Saxon Priest/
 Cold Genius/Sylvan/Pan/Peasant
Vox Luminis / Lionel Meunier

Alpha ② ALPHA430 (98' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Amuz Festival, Antwerp, January 2018

Includes synopsis and libretto



Vox Luminis, directed with a light touch by bass Lionel Meunier,

turn their egalitarian talents to *King Arthur* (1691) and harvest the fruits of Purcell and Dryden's collaborative imagination with affectionate lucidity. The band never sounds as small as it actually is – the single strings led adroitly by Cecilia Bernardini are underpinned by a bass violin (rather than cello) and there is no double bass, according to scholarly thinking about Purcell's likely practices. The playing has admirable finesse, although a soft bass drum thudding during the Second Music air adds nothing of value. A couple of short instrumental pieces from *Bonduca* and *The Old Bachelor* are inserted unobtrusively.

The Saxons' heathen sacrifices in Act 1 flow with unerring pacing and harmonic shaping (the choral shaping of the line 'Die and reap the fruit of glory' is exquisite); the arrival of the valorous Britons in 'Come, if you dare' is performed with swashbuckling panache by Robert Buckland and swaggering trumpets. In Act 2, a chortling pair of oboes lead the way for competing good and bad spirits calling to Arthur and his beleaguered soldiers in 'Hither, this way', voiced by the ensemble with gleeful theatricality in response to Caroline Weynants's sparkling Philidel. Soft pastoral recorders (rather than strings) are used for 'How blest are shepherds', sung mellifluously by Olivier Berten and the chorus; in the duet 'Shepherd, shepherd, leave decoying' a tambourine is played so discreetly that it has little point being there (it is let off the leash in the ensuing hornpipe). The Frost scene in Act 3 has icy scraping from the violins to accompany the awakening of Sebastian Myrus's precise Cold Genius (every shivering note in the right place); possessing a vivid vibrato, Sophie Junker's swooping Cupid has a whiff of mischief as master of ceremonies; the arrival of the frosty chorus in need of love to warm them up is slower than Purcell probably intended but its characterisation aptly shows them 'qui'vring with cold'.

In Act 4, Zsuzsi Tóth and Stefanie True entice Arthur to 'come and bathe with us an hour or two' with imploring urgency;

the passacaglia 'How happy the lover' has the elegant sway of courtly dancing. In the Act 5 masque, Marcus Farnsworth's Aeolus is more 'serene and calm' than 'blustering' (which seems right to me); the reflective mood of the fine-drawn trio 'For folded flocks' is rudely broken by slurry strings and the drunken irreverence of peasants for a raucous account of 'Your hay it is mow'd', plunging without pause into Venus's sublime blessing 'Fairest isle' (Tóth introducing sophisticated embellishments in the last verse). True and Farnsworth's dialogue for two reconciling lovers 'He' and 'She' (which parallels the unification of Arthur and Emmeline) has beguiling tenderness. Although the booklet essay and synopsis are unduly cursory, it has been decades since a recording of any of Purcell's operas as enjoyable as this.

David Vickers

Verdi

I Lombardi alla prima crociata

Giuseppe Gipali *ten*..... Arvino
Alex Esposito *bass-bar*..... Pagano
Lavinia Bini *sop*..... Viclinda
Angela Meade *sop*..... Giselda
Antonio Di Matteo *bass*..... Pirro
Joshua Sanders *ten*..... Prior of Milan
Giuseppe Capoferri *bass*..... Acciano
Francesco Meli *ten*..... Oronte
Alexandra Zabala *sop*..... Sofia
Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro Regio, Turin / Michele Mariotti

Stage director Stefano Mazzonis di Pralafera

Video director Matteo Ricchetti and Adriano Figari

Dynamic ② CDS7826; ② DVD 37826;

② 57826 (140' • DDD • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA5.1, DD5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live, April 17-22, 2018

CD includes synopsis, libretto and translation

DVD/Blu-ray includes synopsis



The Lombards at the First Crusade was Verdi's fourth opera, commissioned by the impresario Merelli after the success of *Nabucco*. It was premiered at La Scala, Milan, in February 1843 and, like its predecessor the year before, went down a storm. One of the most popular numbers was a chorus of crusaders and pilgrims that – let's say opportunistically – recalled 'Va, pensiero', the chorus of Hebrew slaves.

If *I Lombardi* is not performed much nowadays its neglect, I'd say, is entirely justified. The story is preposterous, Solera's libretto full of holes. Whereas in the original poem by Tommaso Grossi the

action is spread over some 20 years, only a few months separate Acts 1 and 2: so we are asked to accept that Pagano, penitent after trying to murder his brother Arvino, has not only become a hermit but is suddenly a 'venerable old man' with, in this production, flowing white locks and a beard better suited to the Emperor Altoum in *Turandot*. Moreover, it is quite impossible to believe that the chorus of crusaders has spotted Pagano when his own brother and his former henchman Pirro have failed to recognise him. As for the music, there are good things, of course – this is Verdi, after all – but there are also weak choruses, a sickly vision of Oronte addressing his lover Giselda from heaven and, incredibly, a Paganini-like violin concerto that introduces and pervades the Act 3 finale.

I doubt that this new production from Turin will win the opera many friends. The sets are simple: the façade of the basilica of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan; an arcade that serves for the palace of Acciano, the Muslim ruler of Antioch and, later, as a frame for the distant view of Jerusalem. The traditional costumes are handsome. But the director Stefano Mazzonis di Pralafera shows little imagination in his handling of the action. And he and the conductor Michele Mariotti between them should have stopped the cast from striking applause-soliciting attitudes. The end of the *cantabile* section of Pagano's Act 1 aria is marked *ff* followed by a hairpin diminuendo: Alex Esposito crescendos. The last note of Oronte's cavatina is marked *pp dolciss*: guess what Francesco Meli does. There are other instances.

Meli is pretty hefty throughout: one longs for the elegance of Carlo Bergonzi (see his collection of Verdi arias on Philips). Esposito makes a sturdy Pagano. The star is Angela Meade as Giselda: not at first sight a convincing daughter to Lavinia Bini's Viclinda, she sings magnificently with exquisite *pianissimos*. Her 'Salve Maria!' is one of the highlights, beautifully phrased. Another highlight is 'Gerusalem! Gerusalem!', the delicate scoring including a solo cello. This forms the opening of Act 3 and the Teatro Regio chorus do it proud. The orchestra does well, too: I especially liked the growly trombones associated with Pagano. The English subtitles are not entirely idiomatic: 'Are you the cave man?' asks Arvino. The CD set includes libretto and translation; it might be a better bet than the DVD, but Gardelli with Deutekom, Domingo and Raimondi (Decca, 11/89) would be better still.

Richard Lawrence



Verdi's neglected fourth opera, *I Lombardi alla prima crociata*, complete with a storyline full of holes, gets a rare outing in Turin

Vivaldi

Andromeda liberata – Sovente il sole. **Argippo** – Se lento ancora il fulmine. **Catone in Utica** – Se mai senti spirarti sul volto. **Il Giustino** – Vedrò con mio diletto. **Orlando furioso** – Ah fuggi rapido; Sol da te, mio dolce amore. **Ottone in villa** – Leggi almeno tiranna infedele. **La Silvia** – Quell' augellin che canta. **Tito Manlio** – Combatta un gentil cor. **La verità in cimento** – Solo quella guancia

Cecilia Bartoli *mez*

Ensemble Matheus / Jean-Christophe Spinosi

Decca © 483 4475DH (58' • DDD • T/t)



'Vivaldi lives today thanks to Cecilia Bartoli!' runs an accolade from

Marilyn Horne in the booklet. I can imagine a crisp riposte from Naïve et al. Yet there's no doubt that Bartoli's 'Vivaldi Album' (12/99) opened many ears to the lyric beauties and dazzling vocal acrobatics in the Red Priest's operas. Two decades on, in a vivid clutch of Vivaldi arias for sopranos and castrati, the Italian mezzo-cum-soprano has lost nothing of her famed agility and colouristic range, or her penchant for expressive extremes.

She sets out her stall in an aria from *Argippo*, where Zanaide (who she, you may ask) veers between fury and forgiveness. If you think Bartoli is going berserk in the fire-spitting opening section, just wait for the *da capo*. 'Screams' was my immediate jotting as she rockets into high soprano territory, and I don't recant. Yet amid this unhinged emoting, she musters her most dulcet softened tone as Zanaide implores her errant husband to return.

Bartoli lives just as dangerously in a solo from *Orlando furioso* and an explosive, trumpet-festooned aria from *Tito Manlio*, unfolding reams of tense, don't-mess-with-me coloratura – thrilling or a tad exhausting, according to taste. If her timbre can coarsen, with unnerving shifts between registers, there's no denying her impassioned conviction. In slower, soulful arias Bartoli's soft singing is invariably beautiful, even if she can overdo that familiar whispered confidentiality. At times I longed for more straightforward simplicity, more of her natural mezzo warmth. Yet even when one bristles at her mannerisms, she compels with her command of the long line – always a Bartoli hallmark – and her palpable

emotional engagement. She is incapable of singing a routine phrase.

In lighter mode Bartoli spars delightfully with Jean-Christophe Spinosi's violin in a capricious avian aria from *La Silvia* (a *dramma pastorale* from which only a few arias survive), and is the knowing minx to the life in a flirtatious solo from *La verità in cimento*. Most moving, as music and performance, is Caesar's ravishing aria from *Catone in Utica*, the line exquisitely caressed over gently floated strings, the wide leaps delicately, gracefully negotiated.

While there's plenty to relish here, both for Vivaldi lovers and Bartoli aficionados, even the most diehard fan may recoil at Decca's presentation. We get texts and translations but not a word about the arias and their context – and you'll struggle to find information about some of the rarer items on the internet. Instead the lavishly illustrated booklet is the most blatant promotional exercise, with toe-curlingly effusive praise from all and sundry, led by that absurd Marilyn Horne hyperbole. If the overall tone of this review is a shade more negative than it might have been, blame the PR team.

Richard Wigmore

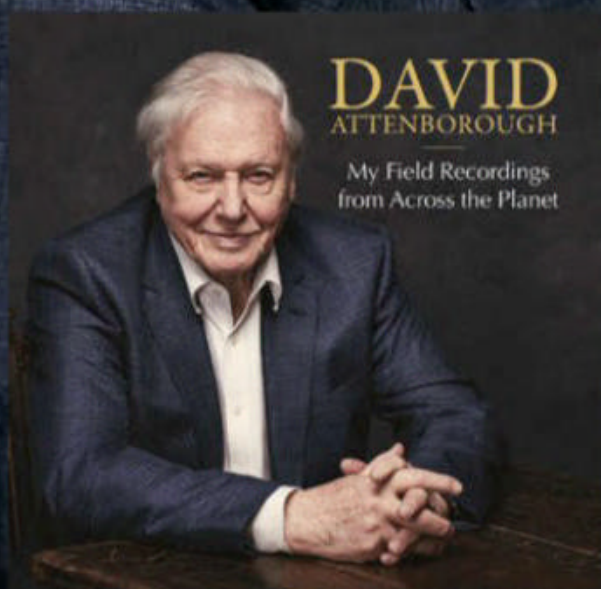
*“While I was theoretically looking for pythons,
in the evenings I would record different types of music...”*

David Attenborough reflects on his time filming *Zoo Quest* between 1954-1963

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

My Field Recordings
from Across the Planet

2CD set
+52-page
Deluxe
Booklet



ORDER NOW

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

THE WORLD MUSIC COLLECTOR

The Editors of Gramophone's sister music magazines, Jazzwise and Songlines, recommend some of their favourite recordings from the past month

Jazz

Brought to you by **jazzwise**

Keith Jarrett

La Fenice

ECM © 676 5856



Since his *Radiance* album and his *Tokyo Solo* DVD of 2002, Jarrett began breaking away from the notion of a solo concert as

sustained improvised arc that made *Köln Concert* such a huge success for both artist and label. Now the emphasis was in breaking his concerts into a series of self-contained episodes that stood in their own right as expressions of his solo art. By 2005 and *The Carnegie Hall Concert*, Jarrett had achieved mastery of what for him was a new approach to solo improvisation, even throwing in blues, boogie-woogie, a standard 'Time on My Hands' and a new perspective on 'My Song' as encores on the Carnegie set. *La Fenice* came almost exactly

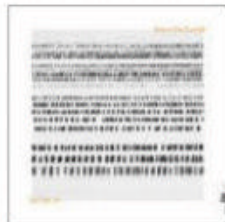
10 months after the Carnegie concert and saw Jarrett refining and focusing his improvisations in blocks of varying lengths to more profound effect. Comprising eight spontaneously conceived episodes of shifting moods, he interpolates the Gilbert and Sullivan composition 'The Sun Whose Rays', and the concert is concluded with 'My Wild Irish Rose', 'Stella By Starlight' and Jarrett's own composition, 'Blossom'.

Stuart Nicholson

Mark Lockheart

Days On Earth

Edition © EDN1120



In scale and ambition, *Days On Earth* is tenor saxophonist Mark Lockheart's magnum opus. It's an impressive achievement in both concept

and execution, the work of a musician who has reached middle-age with his adventurous spirit still intact and is prepared to take musical as well as financial risks to bring his project to fruition. The music stems not from a commission, but from inner necessity to make music with a large ensemble over a broad compositional canvas using a jazz sextet plus two clarinets, two flutes, two French horns, two trumpets, two trombones, 13 violins, five violas, four cellos and a harp. The 'pairs' of woodwind and brass make for a unique tonal signature, while the music moves through pan-stylistic influences both subtly and overtly refracted in the music to achieve its creative ends. There is much to celebrate in this album whose standout tracks include 'A View From Above', 'Part Animal' and the engaging 'Believers'.

Stuart Nicholson

World Music

Brought to you by **SONGLINES**

Phillip Henry

True North

Dragonfly Roots © DRCD005



Ten years ago, Phillip Henry (best known as one half of the award-winning Devon folk duo, Edgelarks, with Hannah Martin) left England for Kolkata to learn the mysteries of the slide guitar from India's finest exponent of the instrument, Debashish Bhattacharya. This solo release is his testament to a decade of discovering the instrument's soul among musicians far and wide.

It is a pure solo record in that Henry is the sole musician, playing a mesmerising spread of strings from National and Weissenborn guitars to the dobro and the chaturangui – a 22-string slide guitar invented by Bhattacharya. The result is a

subtle, gentle, brooding album of delicately plucked instrumentals interspersed with softly sung songs of the road. This is a reflection on a decade of touring the world, with music inspired by the large, elemental landscapes of Australia, Canada and India, as well as the wilder fringes of England. Harp-like chaturangui Indian classical meditations segue into blues standards, folk and country longing. Play this and slip into a slide guitar reverie. **Nathaniel Handy**

Vardan Hovanissian & Emre Gültekin

Karin

Muziekpublique © MUZIEK010



Armenian duduk (oboe) player Vardan Hovanissian and Belgian-Turkish singer and saz (lute) player Emre

Gültekin recorded the beautiful album *Adana* together in 2015, marking the centenary of the Armenian genocide. This much more ambitious disc brings in more collaborators and includes Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish and Georgian music, which represents all the people who once lived in eastern Anatolia when it was more culturally diverse than it is now. Hovanissian's grandfather was one of 200 survivors of the murders and deportations of 1915. Many of the tracks refer back to those days, but others reference more recent events like the murder of Alevis at a festival in Sivas in 1993 and migration tragedies in 2018. This might make it seem a gloomy affair, but much of the music is vibrant and the meeting of Armenian, Turkish and other musicians to produce something about overcoming historical barriers is uplifting. This is a potential disc of the year. **Simon Broughton**

Gramophone, Jazzwise and Songlines are published by MA Music, Leisure & Travel, home to the world's best specialist music magazines. To find out more, visit gramophone.co.uk, jazzwisemagazine.com and songlines.co.uk

REISSUES & ARCHIVE

Our monthly guide to the most exciting catalogue releases, historic issues and box-sets

OPERAS FROM BELGRADE • 96
ROB COWAN'S REPLAY • 102

ANDRÉ PREVIN • 99
CLASSICS RECONSIDERED • 104

BOX-SET ROUND-UP • 101

Russian operas from Belgrade

Mark Pullinger has been listening to seven operatic releases from Australian Decca

Cast your mind towards recordings of Russian operas in the 1950s and where does it go? Almost certainly to Moscow and the Bolshoi LPs from the Soviet state record company Melodiya, often featuring great performances, captured in characteristically abrasive sound. Travel westwards and there were some great Bulgarian singers, notably the mighty Boris Christoff who recorded the likes of *Boris Godunov* (twice), *A Life for the Tsar* and *Prince Igor*, all recorded in Paris, usually with French forces. But what of the former Yugoslavia?

In 1955, Decca taped seven operas with the forces of the Belgrade National Opera, initially released in mono, most reissued in stereo in the late '60s on either Ace of Clubs or Ace of Diamonds. They now appear on CD, many for the first time under the Decca insignia.

Peter Quantrill's fascinating booklet note about how these operas came to be recorded reads like something out of a Cold War spy novel. Gerald Severn, a White Russian émigré working in the US as a film and record executive, assisted actors in escaping from behind the Iron Curtain. He also worked for an American label recording east European folk and classical music and agreed to underwrite the project to tape the Belgrade National Opera. Decca's recording team arrived in Belgrade on the Orient Express. The chosen venue was a cinema which wasn't available until 11pm, so each evening all the seats had to be swiftly removed and the rig set up for intensive through-the-night recording sessions. Over 19 days in February 1955, *Prince Igor* and *Khovanshchina* were recorded, released on LP just five months later. The team returned to Belgrade in September to tape *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *The Snow Maiden* and *A Life for the Tsar*.

In between, for reasons that remain unclear, *Boris Godunov* was recorded,

not in Belgrade but in Zagreb, by Severn alone. The Decca team was clearly unamused. The note once the tape had been heard back in London read: 'This opera was not recorded, nor edited by us ... This is not fit, in my opinion, for dubbing.' This could explain why this *Boris* never had an Ace of ... reissue and is now receiving its first Decca CD release. Was it the recording itself to which they objected or the cuts inflicted?

Dušan Popović strikes me as an excellent baritone – his is one of the best Prince Igors on disc

Understandably for that era, Rimsky-Korsakov's glossy orchestration of the revised 1872 version is used – Mussorgsky's rugged original didn't gain any sort of foothold until the 1970s – so we lose the scene outside St Basil's Cathedral where the Simpleton audaciously confronts Boris. The Kromy Forest scene opens – rather than closes – Act 4, so it ends with Boris's death, as do both EMI recordings featuring Boris Christoff around this period (Issay Dobrowen in 1952, André Cluytens in 1962). However, Pimen's Narration goes AWOL and the 'Polish' Act 3 is cut to shreds so badly that the character of Rangoni disappears entirely. Perhaps the baritone employed to sing him was given an address in Belgrade instead. It's an extraordinary bit of sabotage to the score.

All of which is a shame as the performance is decent. Miroslav Čangalović has a pleasing warm tone as Boris but lacks the true bass weight of Christoff's 'gold-brocaded black' (Michael Oliver's beautiful description). Čangalović is essentially a bass-baritone, but he sings the title role well enough and I like his dramatic interpretation, which is involved but

not overly histrionic. The Pimen, Branko Pivnički, is recorded rather closely, giving his scenes a certain intimacy, and the Varlaam of Žarko Cvejić is suitably gruff. Miroslav Brajnik has plenty of heft as Grigory (The False Dimitri) and his – reduced – scene with Melanija Bugarinović's Wagnerian Marina contains some of the best singing in this set. Severn obtains some imposing bell effects in the Coronation Scene and Krešimir Baranović conducts a reliable account of what's left of Mussorgsky's score. But place it alongside Christoff or later, fuller recordings and this isn't really a contender. More a False Dimitri-like Pretender.

Of the other operas, none suffers such swingeing cuts, although *A Life for the Tsar* was recorded – as in other Soviet states at the time – under its original *Ivan Susanin* title, with scenes referencing the tsar deleted (marked in Decca's tracklisting). The recorded sound is quite dry, characteristic of Decca's early stereo recordings in Geneva, with violins sounding rather thin.

Baranović shares the conducting duties on these operas with Oskar Danon, Director of the Belgrade National Opera from 1944 to 1965 and who was largely responsible for this golden period in the company's fortunes. Danon is particularly fine. His accounts of *Prince Igor* and *Eugene Onegin* have plenty of energy and sound truly idiomatic, with a lively set of Polovtsian Dances. Baranović rises to the challenges of *The Queen of Spades* well and revels in the folklore-inspired *Snow Maiden*.

The orchestral playing, however, is variable, especially an excruciatingly sour principal oboe which tars some of these operas' most poignant moments. Its appearance ruins the 'Dawn over the Moscow River' Prelude to *Khovanshchina* and the 'Dance of the Persian Slaves' sounds more rustic than exotic. And if I were the tenor singing Lensky and had

only one bullet in my pistol, let's just say I wouldn't be aiming it towards Onegin!

All the singers were Belgrade company stalwarts and many feature in several roles. Best of the bunch is fruity mezzo-soprano Melanija Bugarinović who, besides her imperious Marina in *Boris*, demonstrates her range admirably, from an authoritative Countess to an alluring Konchakovna and an impassioned Marfa. It's true, she's no Olga Borodina (whose Konchakovna and Marfa feature on Valery Gergiev's fine Kirov/Philips recordings) but she has a dark, almost contralto-ish tone and no Slavic wobble.

Dušan Popović strikes me as an excellent baritone, a muscular sound with ringing top notes. His is one of the best Prince Igors on disc – heroic and noble – and he makes much of Shaklovity's aria in *Khovanshchina*. He doesn't have as long, elastic phrasing in Yeletsky's great aria as Dimitri Hvorostovsky or Pavel Lisitsian ... but then few do. His Mizgir (*Snow Maiden*) is excellent. Popović makes a wonderfully haughty Onegin, dismissing Tatyana coldly. For some reason, his closing lines are different here; instead of 'Pozor! ... Toska! ... O zhalkiy, zhrebiy moy!' he sings 'O smert, o smert' ('Death, oh death') when Tatyana rejects him. An understandable response, I suppose, even if it's not in the libretto.

I might not be too troubled being turned down by this Tatyana though. Valerija Heybal doesn't boast the most glamorous soprano and her Tatyana sounds rather too soubrettish for my taste, with vinegary tone making her Letter Scene less than attractive. Sadly, Heybal is also Lisa (*Queen of Spades*) and Yaroslavna (*Prince Igor*) where her performances are little better, often squally. She is much better suited to Kupava, the young maiden abandoned by Mizgir in *Snow Maiden*. The soprano Sofija Janković is the main drawback in that Rimsky recording – which is a shame because she sings the title role. I find it a thin, unappealing voice, inclined to shrillness, though others may like her more. She also appears as Chloë (*Queen of Spades*) and Emma (*Khovanshchina*).

Our bass-baritone Boris, Miroslav Čangalović, returns as Prince Gremin, Ivan Susanin, Father Frost and Dosifey, each one a sympathetic presence, with plenty of character even if he can't always quite plumb the necessary bass depths (his descent to the bottom G flat in Gremin's aria is taken gingerly although he does get there in the end). Žarko Cvejić's more unruly bass is well suited to the dual roles



Oskar Danon: a fine conductor who directed a golden period at Belgrade's National Opera between 1944 and 1965



There's no doubting the achievement in recording these operas in such a short timespan and they're undoubtedly a memento of a high watermark in the

history of the Belgrade National Opera. However, they're not really competitive when placed up against some of those Bolshoi recordings or those that followed, through to Gergiev's Mariinsky series. Although there are individual performances to savour, this Decca Eloquence set is more for the curious connoisseur than anyone's first choice for any of these Russian classics. **G**

of Khan Konchak and Galitsky (*Prince Igor*) and he's a good Khovansky too. Of the tenors, Drago Starc is a lovely Lensky, with more of a pulpy tone and less of the nasal Russian tenor qualities often associated with this role. He also features as Sobinin (*A Life for the Tsar*) and Golitsin (*Khovanshchina*) where he makes a strong impression. Alexander Marinković is not the sort of tenor you'd hear cast as Herman in *The Queen of Spades* these days. He doesn't really have an heroic, beefy tone, but is reedy and weedy. He doesn't sound terribly unhinged either, even when about to take his own life.

Supporting casts are variable. You've a stronger constitution than mine if you can suffer Marija Glavačević's tweety coloratura as Antonida (*A Life for the Tsar*). The Belgrade chorus sings with plenty of attack, even if its intonation isn't always perfect; when the orchestra returns after the peasants' unaccompanied chorus in *Onegin*, it reveals that they've veered wildly off-pitch. But their contributions to the big choral numbers in *Boris*, *Igor* and *Khovanshchina* are full-hearted.

history of the Belgrade National Opera. However, they're not really competitive when placed up against some of those Bolshoi recordings or those that followed, through to Gergiev's Mariinsky series. Although there are individual performances to savour, this Decca Eloquence set is more for the curious connoisseur than anyone's first choice for any of these Russian classics. **G**

THE RECORDINGS

Tchaikovsky *The Queen of Spades* Baranović
Decca Eloquence (M) ③ ELQ482 6903

Glinka *A Life for the Tsar* Danon
(M) ③ ELQ482 6924

Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin* Danon
(M) ② ELQ482 6944

Mussorgsky *Boris Godunov* Baranović
(M) ② ELQ482 6883

Borodin *Prince Igor* Danon **G**
(M) ③ ELQ482 6935

Mussorgsky *Khovanshchina* Baranović
(M) ③ ELQ482 6893

Rimsky-Korsakov *The Snow Maiden*
Baranović
(M) ③ ELQ482 6917

GRAMOPHONE

CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Never miss an issue of the world's most authoritative voice on classical music, with five great subscription options to choose from.

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

GRAMOPHONE THE CLUB

Our premium subscription option is a must-have for every classical music enthusiast. Combining all our subscription packages into one, joining The *Gramophone* Club is the most comprehensive and cost-effective way to enjoy *Gramophone*.

- ▶ 13 new print and digital issues during the year
- ▶ Read every issue of *Gramophone* since 1923
- ▶ Access to more than 45,000 recording reviews

From £26 / every 3 months*



THE DIGITAL PACKAGE

GRAMOPHONE DIGITAL CLUB

The complete digital subscription. Perfect for when you're on the move, the Digital Club gives you full access to every edition since 1923 and over 45,000 recording reviews.

From £23 / every 3 months*



OTHER SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGES

GRAMOPHONE PRINT

Receive 13 new print editions during the year, delivered straight to your door.

From £17 / every 3 months*

GRAMOPHONE DIGITAL

13 new digital editions during the year, plus every issue since 1923.

From £17 / every 3 months*

GRAMOPHONE REVIEWS

Searchable database of more than 45,000 expert reviews.

From £17 / every 3 months*

Three easy ways to subscribe

 magsubscriptions.com/gramophone  +44 (0)1722 716997  subscriptions@markallengroup.com

*Full annual retail price for Gramophone Print (13 issues) is £77.87; annual direct debit subscription price for Print, Digital or reviews Database (£67); Digital Club (£90); Full Club (£114). Stated subscription rates are based on a quarterly direct debit option (available for UK bank accounts). Postage and packaging is not included for overseas orders and will be applied at checkout. If you have a subscription enquiry then please email subscriptions@markallengroup.com.

André Previn: the classic recordings

Rob Cowan explores a new bumper box-set of Previn as conductor, composer and pianist

The best of this celebratory collection is pretty well in a class of its own and so it might be useful to focus on some highlights. A disc of French chamber music includes a vivacious account of Saint-Saëns's trumpet Septet (try the opening of the finale), whereas André Previn's playing of the second subject in the first movement of Poulenc's Sextet (at 2'13") is the sort of elevated 'cool' that makes him the stuff of legend in the jazz world. Gershwin is represented by a classic coupling of the Piano Concerto and *Rhapsody in Blue* where Previn is idiomatically supported by André Kostelanetz and his Orchestra, performances that suggest more of Tin Pan Alley than Previn's rather more urbane remakes with the LSO.

I'd not previously encountered a coupling of piano trios by Mendelssohn (No 1) and Fauré with two superb string players, the violinist Feri Roth (leader of the Roth Quartet) and cellist Joseph Schuster, music-making in the Heifetz-Piatigorsky class: alert, intelligently phrased and sweetly expressive. And there's the English symphonic fare, notably Walton's First Symphony, a performance in a million, the gifted American here hell-bent on proving how, given dedication and hard work, a non-Brit could pip any local to the post, including the composer himself. The drive of the first movement, the nervous energy of the second, the slow movement's emotional candour and the finale's exuberance all find Previn and his London Symphony players on top form. I'm not saying it's the only way to perform the work, but as a first stop, it'll win any newcomer over to the piece, no question.

The Vaughan Williams symphony cycle is in general a triumph. Previn's insistence that this music must be 'left alone and will make its point by itself' is more or less in line with the attitudes of Andrew Davis, Boult and Handley, though I could have done with more overt rage in Symphonies Nos 4 and 6: Mitropoulos, Bernstein and Vaughan Williams himself in the former and Boult, Stokowski and Barbirolli (in Munich) in the latter hit the target more securely. My personal



Sony Classical's new box-set has been released to celebrate the 90th birthday of André Previn in April 2019

favourites in this particular series are Symphonies Nos 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8.

Rachmaninov's Second and Third Symphonies with the LSO make for interesting comparisons with their EMI/Warner Classics successors featuring the same artists. Put on the beginning of the Third's finale and there's no contest: this earlier version wins hands down for tautness and lacerating attack. Comparisons with the later Warner version of the Second are complicated by the presence of cuts in this 1966 recording: the Warner option was the first of the complete score. Interesting too, comparisons between the two Kingsway Hall tapings, this newly reissued recording offering less amplitude at the lower end of the spectrum than its richer-toned successor.

Other Russian repertoire includes an extremely well-focused Shostakovich Fifth and a good Tchaikovsky Second except that there's a whopping great edit as the outer section of the Scherzo shifts into the trio (at 2'33"). I greatly enjoyed Previn's genial account of Nielsen's First Symphony, which combines fresh playing with a welcome refusal to drive the music too hard. As for Beethoven, there's a fine complete cycle of the piano concertos with Emanuel Ax, at its best in the First Concerto, where the slow movement spins a dreamy narrative and the sprightly finale has real sparkle. The Beethoven symphony cycle omits Symphonies Nos 1-3, picking up with a lyrically stated account of the Fourth. Beyond that, probably best is a well-built Eighth, and a *Choral* that features a dramatic central

conflagration in the first movement and a bouncy Scherzo.

Trawling through the set I can happily confirm that there aren't many duds. I'd say that the Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale version of Poulenc's Two Piano Concerto under Leonard Bernstein doesn't compare with the best versions that have appeared since, but then it isn't strictly part of the set, just an 'original' coupling that's offered as a sort of bonus. Regarding 'Right as Rain', a miscellany of songs hovering around the theme of The Great American Songbook with Leontyne Price and some distinguished instrumentalists, I can't say I was too enamoured with 'Falling in love again', where Price sounds as if she's having trouble darkening her timbre in imitation of Marlene Dietrich. Elsewhere she's idiomatic and in wonderful voice, virtually never suggesting a diva who is stooping to conquer.

Of course there's plenty more besides, a plethora of varied repertoire in fact, solo, chamber and orchestral, including some of Previn's own music. Transfers are in general good though some of the quieter music in the Vaughan Williams cycle sounds excessively processed. Still, this set gave me considerable pleasure, confirming as it does the extent of Previn's immense achievement, a real boon to musical life worldwide, and most especially within these shores. Yours for about £115. **G**

THE RECORDING

'The Classic André Previn: The Complete RCA and Columbia Album Collection'

Sony Classical © (55 discs) 19075 83167-2

I am music

**I live through your moments
Your first shake of the rattle
Your recorder lesson
Your match day anthem
Your queueing anticipation
Your hands in the air
Your main stage mayhem
Your favourite movie scene
Your first dance
Your last night of the proms
Your family singalong
Your swan song.**

**Musicians'
Union**



**If you care about the future of music,
join us as a supporter for free.**

→ theMU.org

BOX-SET *Round-up*

Rob Cowan offers a personal round-up of some worthwhile CD bargains

Reacquainting myself with the Erato recordings of pianist **Michel Dalberto** has yielded much pleasure, initially with his crisply articulated accounts of Beethoven's Op 2 and Op 10 Sonatas and exceedingly insightful Schubert (D840, 850 and, especially noteworthy, D959 and the *Drei Klavierstücke*, D946), also his poetically responsive readings of various works by Schumann (*Kreisleriana*, *Humoreske*, *Fantasie*, etc) and Brahms (Ballades, and the shorter pieces Opp 117 and 118). The real news is a hitherto unreleased account of Liszt's *Transcendental Études*, S139, Dalberto's reasoning for his change of heart being that after a period of 32 years he is able to listen to the music rather than grapple with its many technical challenges. 'Forget the notes and focus on the music', is how he now puts it. Well, all I can say is that for this listener some of the performances are, at the very least, involving, 'Ricordanza' and 'Harmonies du soir' both full of tellingly observed detail, and by no means oblivious of the music's particular emotional climate. Dalberto's way with Bach's D minor Concerto is rhythmically impeccable and his alert approach to Mozart (Concertos Nos 18 and 25 under Armin Jordan) is refreshing. Chamber works by Brahms and Fauré and song recordings with Barbara Hendricks, Nathalie Stutzmann and Jessye Norman add significantly to the success of a most rewarding collection. The recordings date from 1978 to 2010.

Although no 'first-ever releases' grace Decca's immensely rewarding box of 'Complete Philips, Mercury and Deutsche Grammophon Recordings' of the violinist **Henryk Szeryng**, there are a number of 'first time on CD' or 'first international CD' releases, namely Mozart's E flat *Sinfonia concertante*, K364 (with viola player Bruno Giuranna) and Beethoven's Violin Romance No 2 under Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. There are also Vivaldi's Concertos for two violins, RV552, and four violins, RV580, Bach's sonatas for violin and harpsichord (with Helmut Walcha), the violin concertos with Collegium Musicum Winterthur and violinist Peter Rybar, six of Handel's Op 1 Sonatas, Schubert violin sonatas with Ingrid Haebler, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (under Antal Dorati), the Sibelius and Prokofiev Second Concertos (under Gennady Rozhdestvensky) and Vitali's



Chaconne (with the pianist Charles Reiner). Then there are Szeryng's marmoreal second set of Bach's Solo Sonatas and Partitas, Mozart and Beethoven duo sonatas with Haebler, Mozart violin concertos under Sir Alexander Gibson, Beethoven piano trios with Wilhelm Kempff and Pierre Fournier, as well as concertos by Bartók, Paganini, Saint-Saëns, Schumann, Szymanowski, Wieniawski and a whole host of shorter works. You

There's hardly a performance here that doesn't repay close scrutiny a hundred times over

could say that Szeryng's playing resembled Nathan Milstein's in its consistency, suave delivery, full tone, warmth of feeling, intelligent phrasing and lack of anything resembling coarseness. He was the consummate musician and there's hardly a performance here that doesn't repay close scrutiny a hundred times over.

If Szeryng was a model of artistic consistency then much the same might be said of the older **Sergiu Celibidache**, whose tenure with the Munich Philharmonic (1979-96) produced performances that are unique in their spaciousness, care over detail and an almost hypnotic control of musical line. You 'settle' to a 'Celi' performance, accepting its terms for what they're worth (which in my view is a great deal) and listening differently in the process, which is a little like educational music therapy. Warner's trawl of live recordings has been out at least a couple of times before and the latest box of Bruckner,

Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky symphonies, plus other orchestral pieces and major choral works, will likely take you to regions of interpretation hitherto unknown. The sound is good, the price is reasonable, so if you fancy unlearning the music and relearning it again for the benefit of future listening I'd recommend giving these discs a try. Start with the finale of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, the coda in particular. If that doesn't work for you, it's unlikely that the rest will. I think it's magnificent.

Véronique Gens's three albums of 'Tragédiennes' range across the length and breadth of the French operatic repertoire with vocal performances that are remarkable for their vivid characterisations, tonal lustre and sheer vocal stamina. As conductor Christoph Rousset explained in our January 2018 issue, prior to this venture his period 'limit' had been set at 1800 but when he ventured on this project which covers arias from Lully (*Armide*) to Saint-Saëns (*Henry VIII*) he realised that 'music is music and there is no limit'. And he certainly makes no compromises when it comes to vivid tone-painting, whether it be among the rich oils in Berlioz's *The Trojans* or the striking use of winds and brass in Verdi's *Don Carlos*. Other highlights are from Campra's *Le carnaval de Venise*, Grétry's *Andromaque* and various operas by Rameau. Numerous rarities are included but what makes the entire collection digestible at a single sitting is that in addition to programming the vocal items, Rousset adds various purely instrumental pieces – overtures, chaconnes, airs and dances, etc – which are delightful in themselves and make for a varied listening experience. Furthermore, Erato took the wise decision to print texts and translations rather than opt for a generalised essay. An altogether exceptional release. **G**

THE RECORDINGS

'Michel Dalberto: The Making of a Musician'
Erato © 17 9029 56120-8

'Henryk Szeryng: Complete Philips, Mercury and Deutsche Grammophon Recordings'
Decca © (44 discs) 483 4194

'Sergiu Celibidache: The Munich Years'
Warner Classics © (49 discs) 9029 55815-4

Véronique Gens *Tragédiennes*, Vols 1-3
Gens sop Les Talens Lyriques / Rousset
Erato © 3 9029 56119-1

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of historic reissues and archive recordings



The big man sings

This magnificent set poses an important question: what does the term 'great singer' actually mean? A beautiful voice? A mastery of words, musical line and timing? A genius for characterisation? Many singers qualify on one, maybe two, of those important counts but the Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin qualified on all five, and more. The best of his recordings confront you not with a singing actor or an actor who sings, but with a vibrant human being: Chaliapin the man, with his heart, soul and considerable intellect, becomes actual, and the years fall away like chaff blown by the wind. Ward Marston's achievement is in making the entire range of Chaliapin's discography sound better than ever before, from private cylinders to the last sessions from 1936. It's nothing less than miraculous.

Many shellac sides are being published here for the first time, and as with most spontaneous musicians (jazzers come most readily to mind), the issue of alternative takes or different versions always involves significant shifts in phrasing, dynamics and expressive nuancing, or that unique manner of 'sung speech' only commanded by Chaliapin. The voice itself, though hardly beautiful in the *bel canto* sense (in this respect the early recordings are probably best), is dark, dry and grainy, yet capable of countless gradations of tone, ranging from a sweetened *pianissimo* to a full-throated *fortissimo*. The beauty is in the pathos and sense of theatre that Chaliapin achieves, for example in the six versions of the Russian folk song 'Night' that are included, the recordings dating from between 1902 (two from that year, though one of them may be from as early as 1898) and 1930. Whether the song is accompanied or unaccompanied (he presents it in both guises), the recognisable manner of rhetoric alters minutely so that the listening experience shifts between emotional planes. Heartbreak is at the core of Massenet's 'Élégie', Chaliapin heightening the tragic mood at the climax by projecting his voice to the other end of the studio, or so it sounds.

Among operatic highlights is the Cavatina from Rachmaninov's *Aleko* (especially the 1929 version) and famous recordings of music from Dargomizhsky's *Rusalka* and Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Farlaf's Rondo is a virtuoso tour de force). There are live sequences from Covent Garden, including both Gounod's and Boito's *Mephistopheles* and Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. Boris, a signature role, is generously represented throughout the set; and while the July 1928 live performances turn the music drama into virtual reality, the studio versions also have much to offer. There are various versions of the Death scene, including a previously unissued one from May 1926 where the effect of what seem like skilfully reduced forces makes the music sound more intimate.

It enshrines a manner of performance that nowadays would be unthinkable

Another meaningful contrast is between two recordings of Tchaikovsky's *The Nightingale*, from 1913 and 1921, the former the more constrained of the two. Among the unpublished gems are Grieg's 'Album Lines' (from 1914) and 'The Old Song', especially the former. 'Song of the Flea' and 'Song of the Volga Boatmen' are variously represented, their ubiquity in days gone by doing nothing to lessen their unique appeal today.

Chaliapin's idiosyncratic Mozart and Rossini have always divided listeners' opinions, and his melodramatic way with Lieder (sung in Russian) will not please those schooled in the urbane manners of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, though if you're a fan of the more theatrical Hans Hotter, Helge Rosvaenge or Michael Bohnen you could well be potentially closer to appreciating the histrionic Chaliapin. Maybe the best place to start listening is with the spoken recitation *Dreams: When Still a Child within the Walls of School* (unpublished on 78rpm), where the singer employs the full range of his vocal skills

in pursuit of speech that sings: there's no mistaking who you're listening to, and yet are you listening to spoken music or musical speech? Such is the vocal variety of Chaliapin's mesmerising performance that the divide instantly vanishes.

As to Marston's presentation, it could hardly be bettered. The discs are housed as six double-packs and a single disc in a tough, laminated box with a 324-page laminated hardback book. The book itself is a work of art with texts and translations, full discographical information and an index of titles, as well as copious photographs featuring Chaliapin in various roles, most memorably as Boris. In addition to a comprehensive note on the project from Marston, there are personal recollections by the pianists Gerald Moore and Ivor Newton, a survey of the recordings by Michael Aspinall, a résumé of the singer's life and career by Michael Scott and an essay 'Feodor Chaliapin: The Glory of Imperfection' by Tully Potter, who flies a flag for Chaliapin's 1908 recording of 'Lakmé, ton doux regard', which is indeed very lovely. But if you want to strip bare the singer's essence, I'd suggest that rather than approach opera you listen to one of the folk songs included in the set.

Both as an artist and as a singer Chaliapin matured with age, his characterisations gaining in vividness and emotional impact. Perhaps the greatest value of this set is that it enshrines a manner of performance that nowadays would be unthinkable. No one would have the chutzpah to perform as Chaliapin did, with such rapture, passion, honesty, authenticity of feeling, humour and uninhibited directness. Every music college should own a copy of this set, a testament to what is possible but is nowadays never achieved. It left me in tears on more than one occasion.

THE RECORDINGS



'Feodor Chaliapin: The Complete Recordings'
Marston © 51301-2
(Available from marstonrecords.com)



The Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin: neither a singing actor nor an actor who sings, but a vibrant human being

Navarra in his prime

This desirable and generally well-transferred set features a wide range of recordings spanning the length and breadth of the fine cellist André Navarra's career, the latest being from 1984 when he was well into his seventies and still playing with a full, vibrant tone. The last CD is devoted to short pieces, mostly recorded during the Second World War, but the bulk of the set is from the post-war period, including Lalo's Concerto under Jean Fournet (1948), the famous 1957 Elgar Concerto with the Hallé Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli (which I enjoy as much as this conductor's later recording with du Pré) and (also 1957) Khachaturian's cinematic Concerto under Pierre Derveaux, who also conducts one of the loveliest accounts of Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* you're ever likely to hear. There are two versions of the Schumann Concerto, the broader one under Barbirolli (recorded live in 1962), the other from 11 years earlier under André Cluytens, both with ravishing accounts of the slow movement. In the Dvořák Concerto under Rudolf Schwarz, Navarra plays with great vitality and no lack of passion (though he occasionally strays from the centre of the note). Also included are Haydn's Cello Concerto No 2 and Boccherini's No 9 (both under Bernhard Paumgartner), CPE Bach's Concerto in A (under Tibor Varga) and sonatas by Beethoven (Op 69) and Schubert (Arpeggione) with Artur Balsam, and by Chopin and Strauss with Erika Kilcher. Between this set and the Prague recordings on Supraphon's equally recommendable collection you have a fairly comprehensive representation of Navarra's art.

THE RECORDING



Dvořák, Chopin, Elgar, Falla, Haydn, Schumann et al
André Navarra vc et al
Profil © ⓘ PH18017

Kna's Bruckner

Few conductors on disc have generated as much excitement in Bruckner as did Hans Knappertsbusch. But there's a catch: namely, which editions of the scores he used. In its excellent collection of Brahms and Bruckner symphony recordings, Profil fights shy of relating this information, so I'll do it here: No 3 (rec Oct 1954; 1890 version, rev Bruckner with J and F Schalk; edn T Rättig); No 4 (rec Mar 1944; 1888 version, rev F Loewe; edn A Gutmann); No 5 (rec June 1956; 1896 version, rev F Schalk; edn Doblinger); No 7 (rec Aug 1949; 1885 version, rev Bruckner; edn Gutmann); No 8 (rec Jan 1951; 1892 version, rev Bruckner and J Schalk; edn Haslinger-Schlesinger-Lienau); and No 9 (rec Jan 1950; 1903 version, rev Loewe; edn Doblinger). As ever I'm profoundly grateful to John F Berky's invaluable Bruckner discography for helping me sort out this minefield. And the upshot of this muddle in terms of listening? Very little when it comes to appreciating the sheer drama of Knappertsbusch's conducting and the fervent playing of the orchestras involved, but Bruckner purists will likely run a mile. The Brahms performances are just as striking, the Scherzo from the Fourth Symphony less *giocoso* than forged from iron. Knappertsbusch's Brahms has

breadth, girth, muscle, patience and drama laid on the line. I love it – but be warned, it runs counter to that 'Brahms-lite' approach that many listeners nowadays seem to prefer. I'd recommend sampling first.

THE RECORDING



Brahms. Bruckner Symphonies
Various orchestras /
Hans Knappertsbusch
Profil © ⓘ PH18048

Nikolayeva's Bach

Having welcomed Scribendum's Tatiana Nikolayeva set here in October, I'm delighted to offer even more praise for this one devoted to live performances of all of Bach's keyboard concertos. This great Bachian teams up with a well-drilled orchestra under Saulius Sondeckis plus accomplished fellow pianists Mikhail Petukhov, Marina Yevseyeva and Sergei Senkov for the double, triple and quadruple concertos, the recordings from December 1975. The outer movements of BWV1052 are played with considerable urgency, yet Nikolayeva's crisp touch never resorts to percussive excess. At the start of BWV1053 she toys with echo effects, her phrasing pleasingly incisive, whereas the *Siciliano*, taken at a relatively relaxed pace, is profoundly lyrical. I love her manner in the *Adagio e piano sempre* of BWV1054, which she seems to transform into Passion music. The relatively brief BWV1056 is played with classical poise, BWV1058 with due attention to its mobile contrapuntal lines, whereas the opening *Allegro* of BWV1060 is boldly assertive. BWV1062 in C minor reconfigures the Double Violin Concerto with mixed results. I rather prefer the new recording by David Fray and Audrey Vigoureux (Warner – see page 36). The three-piano BWV1063 is graced with an affecting account of its central *Alla siciliana*, and BWV1064 concludes with a sparkling *Allegro*. There's also a fill-up in the guise of a Tokyo solo recital from 1988 which includes delicate, vividly traced and occasionally dramatic performances of the Toccata and Fugue BWV565, the Partita BWV826, the Ricercare à 3 from *Musikalisches Opfer* and two fugues from *Die Kunst der Fuge*. It's an excellent set, in good stereo sound.

THE RECORDING



Bach Keyboard Concertos
Tatiana Nikolayeva *pf* et al
Lithuanian CO /
Saulius Sondeckis
Doremi ⓘ ⓘ DHR8056/8

Classics RECONSIDERED



Harriet Smith and Jeremy Nicholas reassess the quality and interpretation of Richter's 1960s recording of Liszt's Piano Concertos with the LSO and Kirill Kondrashin



Liszt

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2

Sviatoslav Richter *pf* LSO / **Kyrill Kondrashin**

Philips

There have been several very good recordings of the Liszt concertos; this one is much better. The most remarkable thing is the immense care with which the interpretation has been thought out as a whole by soloist and conductor. Most conductors bash through these concertos with amiable competence, treating them as vehicles for technical display by the soloist and not very much more. Richter and Kondrashin quite clearly regard them as great music; they believe in them passionately. I've always liked them myself and I find they wear surprisingly well, but it has taken this record to make me realise their true quality. The orchestral playing is

taut, exciting, marvellously expressive and truly felt in every bar.

The rethinking of the music results in a number of surprising tempi. These are not whims of soloist or conductor but completely justified returns to what Liszt wanted. The second and much the longer of the two 'movements' of the E flat begins *Quasi adagio*, and there is no change of tempo until the famous triangle entry. At letter E, 20-odd bars before this triangle entry, there is a new tune on the flute and at this point every conductor goes very much faster; even though Liszt indicates no change whatsoever. The reason is that this same tune comes much later on in the concerto at a fast tempo, and conductors assume that it should be played at the same speed whenever it occurs. In other words, they assume that Liszt did not know what he was

up to. Richter and Kondrashin assume that when the tune occurs in an *Adagio* it should be played slowly, and when it occurs in an *Allegro marziale animato* it should be played quickly. This may seem absurdly obvious but the fact remains that it is never done. The start of the A major Concerto is marked *Adagio sostenuto assai*. This is the first time I have heard this opening played really slowly as Liszt quite obviously wanted it. The piano entry at the 13th bar sounds a fraction out of tune, and I suspected tape editing here, but this is a trifle. Felicities abound. The strings between letters C and D attack their *marcato* jabs with superb verve, and the orchestral tutti in the subsequent *Allegro agitato assai* is much the most exciting I have ever heard. The quality of the record in both stereo and mono is all it should be, and the balance is superb. **Roger Fiske (5/62)**

Jeremy Nicholas I have never been a fully paid-up member of the Richter fan club – more an admiring-but-not-uncritical bystander; yet I added this particular recording to my collection the moment I heard it. I grew up with the Julius Katchen–Ataúlfo Argenta set. Often a first or early encounter with a work determines one's response to subsequent concert performances and/or recordings of it. I still love the Katchen, but on hearing this recording of Richter and Kondrashin I remember thinking (albeit reluctantly, given my then feelings about Richter), 'Gosh, this really is something special' – a view reflected in Fiske's encomium.

Harriet Smith I have to confess that I hadn't listened to this in a good while, and now I can't stop playing it. Right from the start of the E flat Concerto, you know you're in the presence of great music (something

Fiske talks about in his brilliantly detailed review). The orchestra's opening phrases conjure a kind of terror in their strength, and throughout the piece, the detailing that Kondrashin gets from an LSO on cracking form is extraordinary. For instance, from 2'22" in the first movement you get Richter moulding Liszt's melodic line so warmly, then there's that wonderfully sinuous clarinet response followed by the tremulous (but in a good way) pair of solo violins and then a moment later a really wonderfully heartfelt cello – with Richter both reacting to and egging on the orchestral musicians.

JN Yes, the clarity and crispness of the opening really packs a punch. It's interesting that Kondrashin's recording with Byron Janis in Moscow (recorded just a year later, in 1962), is an exact reproduction of what he does here. If I were nitpicking, I'd wonder if the *Allegro maestoso* for the first few pages is

too much *allegro* at the expense of *maestoso*. De Greef and especially von Sauer, the only two Liszt pupils to have made commercial recordings of both the Liszt concertos, take a grander view. But moving on, I don't expect to ever hear the muted strings that open the *Quasi adagio* and the piano's entry played more beautifully.

HS Personally, I don't find the concerto's opening tempo too fast – but it's because there's so much personality within the way Kondrashin phrases the music. But I quite agree about the slow movement's introduction – there's not a hint of the saccharine in Richter's playing. And how about the shift of mood at the *L'istesso tempo* (from 2'09")? It's so vividly managed by Kondrashin – with the almost histrionic cellos followed by that louring chord from bassoon and horn, while Richter's recitative is by turns ironclad and suppleness



Richter, the LSO and Kondrashin recorded the Liszt concertos at Walthamstow Assembly Hall in 1961

incarnate. And, as Fiske points out in his review, the reminiscence of the main theme on the flute (3'41") is at the correct tempo, in other words that of the start of the *Quasi adagio*, rather than speeded up, as is often the case.

As for the third movement, I really like the way the triangle is a personality but not the dominant one – the chamber-like scoring seems prescient of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, and even some slightly sour oboes merely add to the colour.

JN Well, Liszt is very precise in his instruction to the triangle player, that it is 'not to be beaten clumsily but in a delicately rhythmical manner'. Isn't that nice? The (unnamed) LSO player took him at his word.

The last movement of the E flat Concerto must be one of the most thrilling accounts on record. Again, it's the crispness and clarity from all departments that pays dividends. But I think the ultimate secret of why it works so well is the tempo relationships (as indeed Fiske implies in his review): the way that Richter is able to take the basic *allegro marziale animato* and

push it forwards even before the first *pìu mosso* mark at 2'27", again at the second *pìu mosso* (2'46"), then at *pìu presto* (3'04") – very difficult to play huge left-hand leaps, handfuls of quaver chords and double octaves at this speed – and the final *presto* (3'33"). Spine-tingling! Do you think the A flat Concerto is as good?


HS I must admit I'm not quite as convinced by this, at least initially. Whereas Fiske liked the fact that the opening was a true *Adagio sostenuto assai*, I find it drags a little, and in the opening moments some of the wind chords are not quite together. Even the piano's *marcato* writing (from 1'51") feels just a bit stolid – again, it's a tempo thing. But once we reach *Un poco più mosso*, with Richter's filigree set against an eloquent horn (2'45"), I feel it suddenly comes alive. And the *L'istesso tempo* (3'48") shows Richter at his ferocious, most unsmiling best, a mood that is intensified when Kondrashin's lower strings enter. In lesser hands, aspects of this movement – the sequences of diminished seventh chords, the wavering chromatic scales – can sink into Hammer horror campery, but not

here as there's complete conviction from both Richter and Kondrashin: it really feels like a ride to the abyss. And the way that Richter softens, literally and emotionally, in the *Tempo del andante* just before the second movement is perfectly judged.

JN There is something peculiar about the first 27 bars – apart from the tempo (Kondrashin takes nearly 30 seconds longer than even the leisurely von Sauer). There's the slightly out-of-tune piano entry noted by Fiske and the woodwind chords not quite in sync with the piano in bars 14 and 16 (0'57" and 1'04"). Everyone seems to have come back from lunch (tuned the piano?) and woken up at the 1'51" mark. You find this point 'just a bit stolid' – but it is marked *pesante*! Fiske is spot on about the strings attacking their *marcato* jabs 'with superb verve' between letters C and D, and I love the way that Richter handles the detached, accented figure at C (3'45"). Have you heard Daniel Barenboim with Boulez showing you how not to do it?

HS I hate the Barenboim with a vengeance! So we're agreed we're not won over by the opening of the Second Concerto. But I find from that point on things really take fire. In the second movement, how beautifully Richter duets with the unnamed cello soloist (from 1'01") – whose playing has an ardency that would be illegal today. You realise how dazzlingly innovative this concerto is, not just formally but for its scoring.

For me the third movement is particularly outstanding: the energy and colour in the *Allegro deciso* opening; and the sense, as things build through the galloping *con strepito e staccato* (from 1'15"), of being just on the edge – almost losing control but not quite. And as we reach the *Marziale un poco meno allegro* (2'42") the cymbals are, praise be, heard within the texture rather than centre stage. You get my drift? Does it have the same tingling excitement for you?

JN Oh yes! I think you'd have to be diehard Liszt-resistant (there are such people, apparently!) not to be swept away by the way that the inexorable drama of the score is executed with such exultant panache. Everything comes together as it rarely does – the brilliant partnership of conductor and soloist, a great orchestra with superb soloists, outstanding sound and realistic balance between all sections. I was struck that Fiske should write (with a mixture of surprise and gratitude) about Richter and Kondrashin taking the two concertos seriously and that they 'clearly regard them as great music' and 'believe in them passionately'. How could you not? 

Books



Arnold Whittall gets to grips with the latest book from Roger Scruton:

'The remarkable survival of the tonal system, despite all avant-garde attempts to kill it, is surely cause for celebration'



Nigel Simeone welcomes a newly translated volume of Boulez lectures:

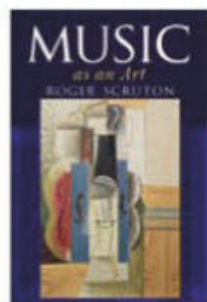
'For readers whose principal interest lies in what these lectures reveal about Boulez the composer, there are rich pickings here'

Music as an Art

By Roger Scruton

Bloomsbury Continuum, HB, 263pp, £25

ISBN 978-1-472-95571-5



Since the 'Big Bang' of 1997 – the appearance of his 500-page *The Aesthetics of Music* (Clarendon Press) –

Sir Roger Scruton has produced a stream of offshoots on musical matters, along with many other publications. *Music as an Art* is particularly heterogeneous in character, ranging from the professionally philosophical – 'I am I to myself only because, and to the extent that, I am you to another' is not the kind of sentence you often encounter in a book about music – to the brashly journalistic: 'during the years around 1968' Pierre Boulez was 'the *Gauleiter* of the avant-garde' and 'the instigator of a false conception of music'.

It is as if little has changed since the years in which *The Aesthetics of Music* itself was taking shape. The individualised digitisation of media has continued to spread, without totally erasing the communal engagement between silent audiences and performing musicians in concert halls and opera houses. But listeners – whether in private or in public – remain primarily committed to pre-1900 repertory or to the post-1900 compositions closest to that repertory in style and technique. The remarkable survival of the tonal system of major and minor keys, despite all avant-garde attempts to kill it off, is surely cause for celebration, and Scruton is at his weakest when lambasting Boulez without more than the most perfunctory acknowledgement that there might be more to his later music than atonal fragmentation and cerebrally constructed chaos.

Scruton is at his most powerful when bringing philosophy and music together in a discussion of 'Nietzsche on Wagner' – which reads like an epilogue to his recent

book about *The Ring* (9/16). There is also a useful outline of how music theorists like Fred Lerdahl and Dmitri Tymoczko have dissected the ways in which modern works might be heard and understood. There are fragments of a comprehensive meditation on the nature of tonality, taking in the ideas of Rameau and Riemann about chords, as well as Schubert's loosening of the classical diatonic bonds and Benjamin Britten's 'polytonality'. Various mainstream modern composers, from John Adams to James MacMillan and Judith Weir, are touched on in passing, while David Matthews is considered more fully in a chapter reprinted from an earlier publication. But Scruton fails to acknowledge Schoenberg's admittedly frustrating struggles to avoid atonality, or to mention those initiatives – sometimes called 'spectral' – which have been working since the 1970s with aspects of the harmonic series. The results, in British composers like Jonathan Harvey, George Benjamin and Julian Anderson, might give Scruton some cause for cautious optimism about the future of a music that is positively modernist rather than negatively avant-garde.

When he claims that 'we understand music by moving with it, and what we understand is not a thought but a "field of sympathy" into which we are inducted by the music as we are inducted into a ritual by the gestures of a priest', Scruton vividly reinforces his commitment to those archetypal, collective experiences of singing and dancing, of moving in time and of being moved by what is being sounded in time. He is also on to something in emphasising modernism's reliance on concentrated motivic cells. But, to be convincing, the conclusion that such cells can never provide an adequate substitute for 'that ineffable "invitation" with which a tune begins, or the closure ... with which it normally ends' needs fuller analysis than it receives here.

For the moment enough remains of communal 'moving' – the hymns, folk songs and popular songs that 'we' can all sing along with at big public events. But

being subject to constraints and hierarchies that underwrite such rituals is no longer automatically respected as inevitable and right. In these circumstances, one wonders how much longer the convention of collective silence at serious music performances will survive, and whether an increasing sense of incongruity will promote the drift to private listening for anyone reluctant to participate in some collective action.

These speculations take the topic of music as an art beyond even Scruton's capacious boundaries. But it is surely right that work as provocative and timely as his – when considered as a whole, around the core of *The Aesthetics of Music* – should invite such thoughts. It is one thing to affirm the familiar nostrum that music is created and performed to be heard; to some, the prospect of skilled and collective music-making, in works by Beethoven or Boulez, being heard only by individuals via recordings of one kind or another is distasteful in the extreme. But it might yet prove to be 'the end of all our exploring'.

Arnold Whittall

Music Lessons

The Collège de France Lectures

By Pierre Boulez

Edited and translated by Jonathan Dunsby,

Jonathan Goldman and Arnold Whittall

Faber & Faber, HB, 662pp, £30

ISBN 978-0-571-33427-8



Pierre Boulez was one of the most thoughtful – and thought-provoking – writers about music in the latter

part of the 20th century. *Music Lessons* is a beautifully translated and scrupulously edited volume of his lectures at the Collège de France between 1976 and 1995 – coinciding with the period between *Rituel* and *Sur Incises* in his creative output. The original French texts were prepared for publication by Boulez himself with

Jean-Jacques Nattiez. The lectures as published comprise 16 chapters, printed chronologically from the inaugural address to the final lecture in 1995 ('The Work, Whole or Fragment?'). For readers whose principal interest lies in what these lectures reveal about Boulez the composer, there are rich pickings in every chapter, several of which are extended meditations on aspects of the creative process. Boulez's prose is often concentrated – this book could never be described as an 'easy' read – but it is also lucid and concise. The English translation mirrors his literary style extremely well and in chapters such as 'The System and the Idea' (Chapter 10) the text overflows with insights into Boulez's thinking about earlier music, including the Prelude to Act 1 of Wagner's *Tristan* and a brilliant discussion of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern (described as the 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost' of early 20th-century music), their use of systems and their very different aesthetics.

Music Lessons is an absorbing series of reflections on the art (and craft) of composition from Bach to the end of the 20th century. There are some references that might come as a surprise, such as Boulez's choice of Brahms to illustrate variation form. Just occasionally he falls back on generalisations, writing that 'it is generally claimed' that large-scale forms did not suit Schubert and Schumann (page 195) without exploring this idea further. But on Wagner and Mahler, for instance, he expresses himself with far more personal conviction. Boulez's teacher Messiaen was much discussed in the earlier essays published in English as *Orientations* (Faber & Faber, 1986). Here he is mentioned on only a few occasions, such as in comments on Boulez's own *Structures I*, which used material taken literally from Messiaen's 'Mode de valeurs et d'intensités': 'Independently of all the personal reasons that led to my borrowing that thematic element [these are not elaborated by Boulez] – and it was indeed a case of thematic borrowing – I would stress that the Messiaen material was not taken from finished material ... but rather from Messiaen's own starting points.' For Boulez, the challenge was to present the borrowed ideas 'in a new light [that] could lead to results far removed from the original, which had provided only a single solution.'

In 'Memory and Creation' (Chapter 12), Boulez tackles a range of issues relating to the idea of authenticity, venturing into the question of performing traditions and referring to two composers with whom he was closely associated as a conductor:



Thoughtful and thought-provoking: Pierre Boulez's lectures have been beautifully translated

'Wagner wanted to establish a school to start an authentic tradition of his interpretations; he failed, for lack of funds, but his quite justified desire to provide interpreters with the basis for understanding his works would be transformed, after his death, into a rigid code of conduct, repeatedly shown to be sclerotic and harmful.' Closer to our own time – and writing about a composer he knew personally – Boulez writes that Stravinsky 'asserted the unique documentary value of his own recordings and maintained that future interpreters should study them and be obliged to refer to them. Unfortunately, though, his precarious gifts as a performer, the circumstances and time pressures under which the recordings were made and the quality of the forces at his disposal do not let us regard this evidence as any sort of absolute model. In any case can there be such a thing?' In this engrossing chapter,

Boulez also talks about works that were 'important to my development', and what he learned from studying them. They include an enthralling discussion of the musical language of Webern's Second Cantata.

This is an endlessly fascinating book which repays repeated reading. In his introduction, Nattiez notes that while the lectures are presented chronologically, they need not be read that way, and he offers a series of 'itineraries': 'Chapter 5. "Composition and Its Various Gestures", is definitely the one that most synthesises the fundamental ideas elaborated in the rest of the book'; but 'if we wish to know what Boulez has to say about the giants of the 20th century – Mahler, Debussy, Stravinsky or Varèse – then "Theme, Variation and Form" (Chapter 8) is the place to look.' However you decide to read *Music Lessons*, it is sure to provoke, to beguile and to inform. **Nigel Simeone**

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

Nielsen's Fifth Symphony

Nielsen's humanistic symphonic outlook reached its apogee in his Fifth Symphony. **David Fanning** surveys the available recordings

When interviewed for a Copenhagen newspaper just before the premiere of his Fifth Symphony in January 1922, Nielsen was asked about the meaning of his new work. He responded cagily: 'Long explanations and indications as to what music "represents" are just evil; they distract the listener.' Asked whether the war (in which Denmark had been neutral) had affected his composition, he replied that although he was not conscious of any such influence, 'One thing is certain: not one of us is the same as we were before the war. So maybe so!'

Another thing is certain: that the war was not the only thing that had changed Nielsen. Around the time of its outbreak, his marriage to the sculptress Anne Marie Brodersen had hit the rocks, following revelations of his infidelity. Furthermore, having resigned his conductorship at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre, he had entered the precarious life of a freelance for the first time since gaining a post as second violinist in the theatre orchestra back in 1889. As for the war itself, in its early days he had written to his Swedish composer-friend Bror Beckman, lamenting its impact on everything he had previously held dear: 'The national feeling, which up to now has been considered something elevated and beautiful, has become like a spiritual syphilis that has eaten up brains and now grins out through the empty eye-sockets in monstrous hate.' In other words, the entire system of values that had supported him up to that point as a renewer of the humanist symphonic tradition, and which had reached a mighty climax in his Third Symphony, the *Sinfonia espansiva* of 1910-11, now had a gigantic question mark against it.

This three-pronged mid-life crisis found immediate expression in his next symphony, *The Inextinguishable* (1914-16), most explicitly in its two opposed pairs of timpani, hurling blows against each other and the orchestra like some mighty Nordic riposte to the 'Danse sacrée' from *The Rite of Spring* (whose riotous premiere had taken place on May 29, 1913, two months after Schoenberg, Berg and Webern's *Skandalkonzert* in Vienna). Except that Nielsen was never going to rest content with representing barbarism, still less glorying in it or courting sensation. His humanist values remained intact to the extent that he was more determined than ever to seek out transcendent positives. His project was now to build in violent destructiveness as the negative polarity in a life-and-death symphonic drama that would still win through to energetic affirmation: a Beethovenian *per ardua ad astra* for his own strife-torn times.

One more experience is relevant to where the Fifth Symphony was coming from. This is Nielsen's 90 minutes of incidental music for an extravagant, two-evening staging of *Aladdin* (composed 1917-19, first performed in 1920). Some critics picked up on the connection between the Fifth Symphony and *Aladdin*'s pastoral-exotic dreamworlds and trenchant Arabian marches and dances, plus its explicitly titled 'Battle between Good and Evil'. With hindsight, too, the depiction of the 'Market at Ispahan', with its four mini-orchestras each in its own metre and key, was a testing ground for technical innovations whose potential for larger-scale exploitation he would go on to explore in the symphony.



Carl Nielsen on the Island of Funen, standing in front of his childhood home 'Petersborg' (now a museum dedicated to the composer) in 1927

The crystallisation of all these elements is the role of the side drum in the first of the Fifth Symphony's two movements. Accompanied by clamorous triangle and timpani, it exploits the apathy left by the drifting *Tempo giusto* opening pages ('out walking in the countryside, not thinking of anything in particular', as the composer characterised it, underplaying the anxious anticipation he built into this emotional vacuum). And the side drum returns with even more ferocity in the second half of the movement (the glorious G major *Adagio* in which, as Nielsen put it, again with remarkable understatement: 'I become aware of myself as a musician ... and



now everything is singing pleasantly'). This time the side drum enters in its own independent tempo – Nielsen suggested having a metronome in front of the player, set to crotchet=116 – before tipping over into a furious improvised cadenza, 'as if at all costs to disturb the music'.

Despite the first movement's positive outcome and the regenerative force of the balancing second movement, this level of violence was too much for some critics, and even for some of Nielsen's longstanding supporters. The composer Victor Bendix wrote to him after the premiere: '... this *Sinfonie filmatique*, this insalubrious

trenches-music, this impudent fraud, this clenched fist in the face of a defenceless, novelty-snobish, titillation-sick public, commonplace people en masse, who lovingly lick the hand coloured with their own noses' blood.' Nielsen was taken aback: 'There's no real difference between this work and my others,' he complained, 'though perhaps certain freedoms are more strongly marked.' Even more astonishing to him were the scenes at a Swedish performance two years after the Copenhagen premiere, where, as a Danish newspaper reported: 'Around a quarter of the audience rushed for the exits with

confusion and anger written over their faces, and those who remained tried to hiss down the "spectacle".' Ever a provocative voice in Nordic music, Nielsen could finally boast his very own riot, à la *Rite*.

HISTORIC RECORDINGS

There is no way of knowing how early performances of the Fifth Symphony sounded, since the first recording, under Georg Høeberg, was not made until 1933, two years after the composer's death. And since no recording survives of Nielsen himself conducting anything whatsoever, we have only his score to go on, plus some



Nielsen, wife Anne Marie and daughter Irmelin (centre) in 1922, the year the Fifth was premiered

fragmentary comments. When he heard Furtwängler conduct the piece at an ISCM Festival in Frankfurt in 1927, he approved the German's request for the clarinet to play more hysterically (the instrument acts as collaborator with the side drum in the first movement and has a related outburst in the *Allegro* second movement's whirling *Presto* fugue), and although he would have preferred a more flowing tempo for the beginning of the work, he was prepared to let Furtwängler follow his own convictions. Jascha Horenstein was present as Furtwängler's assistant, and his two recordings (1969 in the studio, 1971 live – both nla) are among the more convincing for their time, though the former is marred by, presumably, haste in the editing process, such as when the side drum enters a bar early in the *Adagio*, stops, then starts again in the right place, before going on to give one of the finest cadenzas on record.

No fewer than five early recordings of the Fifth Symphony by the Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra are gathered together on Danacord's 30-CD set of vintage Nielsen recordings – assembled and documented by Jesper Buhl and a self-recommending issue for Nielsen

lovers. The earliest of all is conducted by the aforementioned **Georg Høeberg** in 1933. Nielsen had mixed feelings regarding Høeberg, whose favouring on the part of the Royal Theatre had been one reason for his resignation. And this recording is a real curate's egg, with several puzzling interventions in the orchestration, some drastic unmarked (and ineffective) agogic accents and shifts of tempo, but also a thrilling acceleration – also unmarked – in the second-movement coda.

Erik Tuxen left three accounts – from 1950 in the studio; from the Edinburgh Festival concert later that year which marked a crucial breakthrough for Nielsen's music outside Denmark; and from Paris, also live, in 1955. These are progressively more convincing, as three nodal points confirm: the opening pages, which need to strike a balance between indifference and unease (Nielsen's draft score headed the whole first half of the movement 'vegetative'); the side drum's initial entry, which is notably more intense in the Edinburgh account; and the foaming string unisons in the outer sections of the second movement (which Tuxen only really nailed in Paris). Tuxen was

responsible, along with Nielsen's son-in-law Emil Telmányi, for the revised version of the score that was published in 1950, and Telmányi in particular could justly claim that he had his father-in-law's imprimatur for his tweaks to the orchestration. Their score was only supplanted by the scholarly version in the Carl Nielsen Edition in 1998, and even now some performances still use the older parts.

Thomas Jensen was a theory pupil of Nielsen's at Copenhagen Conservatory and played cello in the Tivoli Orchestra, attending Nielsen's rehearsals of his symphonies, from which he reportedly retained a good memory for the composer's tempos. Before the appearance of Bernstein's New York account in 1962, Jensen's was the reference recording. It served its purpose well, above all with its fiery *Allegro* and scarifying *Presto* fugue, both taken at a lick not many recent accounts are prepared to risk, presumably for the sake of their string sections.

CLASSICS AND NEAR-MISSES

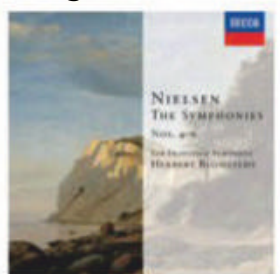
I refuse to classify as 'historic' any recording made after I was born. So that conveniently brings us to the stereo era. **Leonard Bernstein** comes next, and his account is a case apart. His Nielsen instincts could sometimes play him false, as they did in the Second and Fourth Symphonies and in the finale of No 3. But with the Fifth he hit the bullseye. Admittedly not everything is irreproachable: at the outset, for example, there is a touch of uncalled-for *espressivo* that is not quite ambiguous enough for Nielsen's unique psycho-symphonic drama. This is a tricky balancing act. Colin Davis, in one of the finest of all modern accounts, is even further down the self-expression route than Bernstein, while Kletzki (LP only, 3/71), **Neeme Järvi**, **Esa-Pekka Salonen** and Andrew Davis (Virgin – nla) all err on the side of underplaying, and **Rafael Kubelík** is positively lethargic. But overall Bernstein's is a performance that combines a sense of a discovery with a matchless grasp of how much there is at stake,

THE SAFE CHOICE

San Francisco SO / Blomstedt

Decca © ② 460 988-2DF2

Blomstedt offers in 1987 an admirable straight-down-the-middle version, with



plenty of drama and no exaggerations or questionable decisions. The strength in depth of the playing and Decca's first-rate recorded balance are models.

THE HISTORIC CHOICE

Danish RSO / Jensen

Decca Eloquence © ② ELQ480 1858

Thomas Jensen's 1954 recording became the benchmark account for years to come.

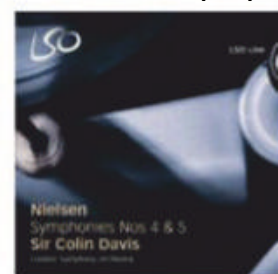


If you have something like £90 to spare, find him alongside four other historic Danish accounts of the piece in Danacord's 30-disc compilation.

THE 21st-CENTURY CHOICE

LSO / Davis LSO Live © ② LSO0694

Colin Davis came late to Nielsen, but when he finally did so in 2009 he brought with him the same propulsive fieriness that



made him a peerless Berliozian. Forgive the over-expressive opening and the insufficiently poetic *Andante*, and thrill to the irresistible overall drive.



'Irresistible drive': Davis, who came late to Nielsen, makes up for lost time with the LSO in 2009

symbolically. For some critics at the time his side drummer loomed unnaturally large. But that was by comparison with Jensen, in whose recording it loses its threatening edge. The first live performance I heard was by the BBC Philharmonic under Ole Schmidt in the mid-1970s, and the side drum was every decibel as present as Bernstein's. I have since encountered recordings that match the venom of Bernstein's side drummer and clarinettist, the fervour of his strings in the *Adagio*, the swagger and exhilaration of his *Allegro*, the danger of his *Presto* fugue and the hurtling panache of his coda, but not a single one that combines all those elements in one sweep.

Ole Schmidt himself came close in 1974, with the first complete set of Nielsen symphonies on record. But not even the LSO strings could disguise the fact that the piece was new to them, and the adverse recording conditions – an unheated church during the power cuts of Edward Heath's three-day week – meant that many ragged edges, especially in the second movement, could not be smoothed off in retakes. Nor is it easy to listen past the artificially close timpani and brass. How I wish Schmidt's BBC Philharmonic concert could have been released commercially.

Nielsen himself knew that the second movement was a devil to bring off. The strings in particular are sorely tried in the regenerative opening *Allegro*, even before it collapses into the macabre, muted *Presto* and its mirror-image restorative *Andante* – among the most devilish and most poetic fugues, respectively, in symphonic history. Choose the composer's notated dotted minim=72-76 from the outset and you run into choppy waters with the strings'

triplet quavers; but set the tempo from those triplet passages and the opening feels far too sedate. Günther Herbig's Berlin Symphony played it too safe in 1966 (Berlin Classics – nla), as did numerous

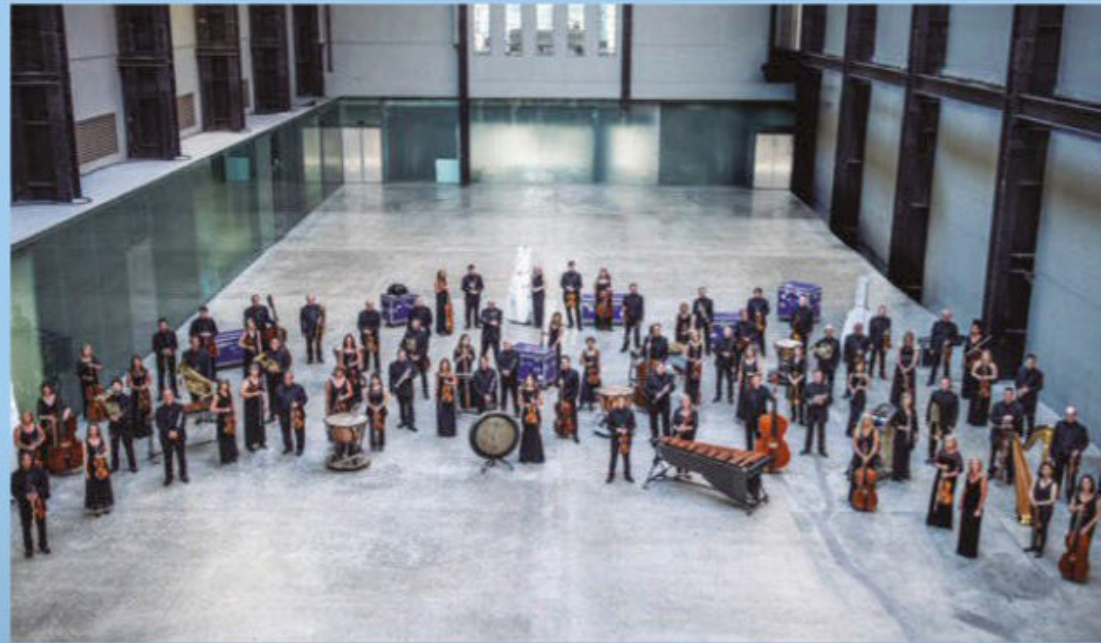
recorded performances in the post-Schmidt 1970s and '80s, including Kubelík, **Paavo Berglund** and **Gennady Rozhdestvensky**, while **Kirill Kondrashin** live with the Concertgebouw in 1980 – surely a dream team for this piece – goes for broke but fails to bring a working majority of the string section with him. Closest to an all-round satisfying account in these years is **Herbert Blomstedt** in San Francisco in 1987; this is several cuts above his 1975 Danish Radio account and its many fine insights and wonderful feel for the long line make it a safe choice for anyone allergic to Bernstein's extremes.

PITFALLS AND NEW PATHS

Alongside the technical challenges of the second movement, there are pacing issues in the first that can make a radical difference to its effect. Nielsen marked the 'vegetative' opening *Tempo giusto*, crotchet=100 (it actually goes best when allowed to move forwards slightly through the opening paragraphs), but he suggested nothing for the *Adagio* apart from the side drum entry at crotchet=116. Conductors

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

DATE / ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1933 Danish RSO / Høeberg	Danacord (S) (3) DACOCD365/7; (S) (30 CDs) DACOCD801/30 (1/16)
1950 Danish St RSO / Tuxen	Danacord (30 CDs) DACOCD801/30 (10/50 ^R , 7/85 ^R , 1/16)
1950 Danish St RSO / Tuxen	Danacord (S) (30 CDs) DACOCD801/30 (1/16)
1954 Danish St RSO / Jensen	Decca Eloquence (S) (2) ELQ480 1858; (S) (30 CDs) DACOCD801/30 (1/16)
1955 Danish St RSO / Tuxen	Danacord (S) (30 CDs) DACOCD801/30 (1/16)
1960 BBC Northern SO, Hallé Orch / Barbirolli	Barbirolli Society (M) (2) SJB1084/5 (7/16)
1962 New York PO / Bernstein	Sony Classical (F) (D) MS6789; (S) (100 CDs) 88985 41714-2 (5/63 ^R , 2/11)
1974 Bournemouth SO / Berglund	EMI/Warner Classics (S) (13) 019255-2 (6/75 ^R , 1/14)
1974 LSO / Schmidt	Alto (S) ALC1236; (S) (3) ALC2505 (1/75 ^R , 7/87 ^R)
1975 Danish RSO / Blomstedt	EMI/Warner Classics (S) (3) 500829-2 (10/75 ^R , 9/96 ^R)
1978 SNO / Gibson	Chandos (S) (D) CHAN6533 (6/78 ^R , 10/91)
1980 RCO / Kondrashin	RCO Live (S) (14) RCO08005 (6/09)
1983 Danish Rad Sinfonietta / Kubelík	Warner Classics (S) (13) 2564 63190-1 (3/86 ^R)
1987 San Francisco SO / Blomstedt	Decca (S) (2) 460 988-2DF2; (S) (6) 478 6469DC6 (10/88 ^R)
1987 Gothenburg SO / Chung	BIS (F) BIS-CD370 (12/87); (M) (4) BIS-CD614/16 (7/93)
1987 Swedish RSO / Salonen	Sony Classical (S) (6) 88875 16797-2 (6/88 ^R)
1988 Royal Danish Orch / Berglund	RCA (S) (3) 88875 05218-2 (8/95 ^R)
1991 Gothenburg SO / N Järvi	DG (B) (3) 477 5514GT3 (10/93 ^R , 10/05)
1991 RSNO / Thomson	Chandos (B) (D) CHAN9067 (2/93); (M) (3) (D) CHAN9163
1992 Irish Nat SO / Leaper	Naxos (S) 8 550743 (10/94)
1993 Royal Stockholm PO / Rozhdestvensky	Chandos (S) (3) CHAN10271 (2/05)
1999 RLPO / Bostock	Classico (B) (D) 220562; Documents (B) (D) 298342 (12/99 ^R)
1999 Danish Nat SO / Schönwandt	Naxos (B) 8 570739 (9/00 ^R)
2000 Danish Nat SO / Schönwandt	Dacapo (F) (3) (DVD) 2 110403/5 (9/06)
2000 BBC Scottish SO / Vänskä	BIS (F) BIS-CD1289 (9/03); (M) (3) BIS-CD1839/40
2002 Hallé Orch / Elder	Hallé (F) CDHLL7502 (7/03)
2004 Cincinnati SO / P Järvi	Telarc (F) CD80615 (11/04)
2005 Janáček PO / Kuchar	Brilliant (S) (3) 94419
2008 Gothenburg SO / Dudamel	DG (M) (3) (D) 477 9449GX3 (A/11)
2009 LSO / C Davis	LSO Live (M) (S) LSO0694 (4/11); (M) (3) (S) (S) LSO0789
2011 Frankfurt RSO / P Järvi	RCA (S) (3) 88875 17880-2 (2/16)
2014 New York PO / Gilbert	Dacapo (F) (S) 6 220625 (2/15); (M) (4) (S) 6 200003
2015 BBC PO / Storgårds	Chandos (M) (3) CHAN10859 (7/15)



Alisa Weilerstein & Inon Barnatan
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Iestyn Davies ©Chris Sorensen



COMING UP AT SAFFRON HALL

Box Office
www.saffronhall.com
or 0845 548 7650

Sat 9 February, 7.30pm
**Weilerstein, Barnatan,
Khachatryan, Currie
& Friends**

Sun 17 February, 7.30pm
**BBC Symphony Orchestra:
A Berlioz Celebration**

Sun 24 March, 3pm
Iestyn Davies & Fretwork



Leonard Bernstein's exhilarating 1962 recording with the New York Philharmonic 'hits the bullseye'

who bring in the side drum at double the *Adagio* tempo and the same as the opening *Tempo giusto* surely miss the point, since this gives the impression that the side drum is fitting in with the orchestra rather than challenging it to a duel. This is the case with **Myung-Whun Chung**, **Bryden Thomson**, Tuxen, **Alexander Gibson**, Kletzki and Kubelík. Some have the side drum *slower* than double tempo (both Berglunds, and Järvi father and son), which is effective but not nearly as venomous as Bernstein, Schmidt, Serov, Salonen, Storgårds and Colin Davis, who all bring it in well above double tempo.

Given the symphony's several direct anticipations of Shostakovich, it is curious that conductors from Eastern European backgrounds have not fared better in it. Apart from Kondrashin and Rozhdestvensky, the American-Ukrainian **Theodore Kuchar** does show a fine feeling for the piece, but his brave Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra sounds over-parted (as do **Adrian Leaper**'s Irishers). Edward Serov, incidentally the first conductor to perform the symphony in Russia, shows that an orchestra of modest dimensions – from Nielsen's childhood home region – can actually achieve excellent balance and range of character, and it may well be that his Odense Symphony in 1993 still sounded fairly close to what Nielsen himself would have expected from the piece (Kontrapunkt, 9/95 – nla).

Before the appearance of the scholarly score in 1998, Schmidt and Andrew Davis had already gone back to the original, with varying degrees of success. This edition has become standard since **Douglas Bostock** first used it in his estimable Royal Liverpool

Philharmonic account the following year (a problematic version because neither the side drum nor the strings are done any favours in the recorded balance).

Michael Schönwandt's Danish National Symphony were reportedly less than thrilled at having to abandon their familiar parts, and their recording betrays a touch of over-familiarity with the score, while Schönwandt's pacing is itself distinctly underwhelming. The same drawbacks are evident in their DVD version, recorded on a separate occasion, which, in its fussy fixation on individual instrumentalists, is also a fine example of how not to film an orchestral performance (the accompanying film documentary of Nielsen's life is worth viewing, however).

MILLENNIALS

So far as recordings in the new century are concerned, it's swings and roundabouts. Though quite a number feature orchestras with a fine Nielsen pedigree and conductors eager to embrace the cause, few if any fully live up to their billing.

Alan Gilbert's much-heralded New York account scarcely falls short of Bernstein's for enthusiasm, affection, energy and nobility, lacking just a touch of headlong recklessness in the *Presto* fugue. The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra must have thought it knew the piece like the back of its hand, but **Gustavo Dudamel** brought with him a highly individualistic approach: faster and in due course more militaristic than anyone else in the *Tempo giusto* but at some cost to its initial drifting indifference, and then perversely stern and reined-back in the *Allegro*. With the Hallé, **Mark Elder** is daringly under tempo for the *Tempo giusto* but he

gets the tone of troubled indifference just right; the problem is that in sticking so doggedly to his guns he struggles to bring the drama to the boil for the side drum confrontations, while his second movement is a touch pedestrian.

Paavo Järvi brought to the catalogue two orchestras without conspicuous track records in Nielsen, but both his accounts, interesting though they are for their variety of pacing and their numerous perceptive details, suffer from exaggerations in the first movement, and both hang fire in the second. **Osmo Vänskä** paces the *Tempo giusto* superbly but could have done with a more flowing and flexible tempo for the *Adagio*; there is some splendid barbaric side-drumming, however, and the BBC Scottish strings emerge largely unscathed from a fiery second movement. It's a close-run thing with **John Storgårds** and the BBC Philharmonic in the first movement but their second, while weighty enough, doesn't have anything like the careering energy it needs, and I demur over the conductor's reading of *tranquillo* as implying a retardation. Elder is among the few who similarly take this approach; most others, from the historic Danes onwards, read the *tranquillo* as a character rather than tempo suggestion.

For all my reservations over a certain undue haste in the second movement's recuperative *Andante*, it is **Colin Davis** and the LSO (2009), alone among recordings from the last 20 years or so, that I would want to hang on to. The orchestra is on cracking form and Davis's Berliozian energy carries all before it. No one – not even Bernstein – has made the final pages more thrilling.

Now, if Simon Rattle, back at the LSO helm, could take his Nielsen enthusiasm into the studio (anyone remember his 1980s BBC TV documentary?) wouldn't that be something? But until then, it's Bernstein for me. If you don't know the music at all, try his blistering account and see if you don't end up thinking, 'Nielsen, where have you been all my life?' **G**

TOP CHOICE

New York PO / Bernstein Sony © ➔ MS6789
For sheer incandescence, no one has surpassed Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in 1962. With a lethal side drum



and hurtling tempos in the second movement, Bernstein takes huge risks, capturing Nielsen's sense of adventure and exhilarating discovery to the full.

PERFORMANCES & EVENTS

Presenting live concert and opera performances from around the world and reviews of archived music-making available online to stream where you want, when you want

Herkulesaal der Residen, Munich & BR-Klassik Concert

Diana Damrau sings Strauss, January 25

Diana Damrau is the star of the first half of this concert from Mariss Jansons and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, as the soloist in Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*. The orchestra are then joined by the Bavarian Radio Choir for what is Jansons's first Munich-era performance of Bruckner's Mass No 3 in F; and the top-drawer cast of soloists he's assembled for the occasion are Sally Matthews, Karen Cargill, Ilker Arcayürek and Stanislav Trofimov. We should also say that it's not a problem if you flick to these pages after the event, because you'll still be able to watch on catch-up.

br-klassik.de/concert

Covent Garden, London & cinemas worldwide

La traviata, January 30

For those who prefer their 19th-century opera to come looking sumptuously period-appropriate, Richard Eyre's stunning naturalistic production ticks all the boxes; which of course also makes it perfect for the cinema screen. It's quite the cast for this particular revival too, beginning with who's on the conductor's podium, because it's Antonello

Manacorda in what is his highly anticipated debut at the house. He's directing a cast led by Ermonela Jaho and Charles Castronovo as Violetta and Alfredo, and with Alfredo's implacable father sung by Plácido Domingo. **roh.org.uk, roh.org.uk/showings**

Vienna Konzerthaus & Takt1

Yuja Wang plays Schumann's Piano Concerto, January 31

Under the guest baton of 2017 International Opera Awards' Newcomer of the Year Lorezo Viotti, this programme from the Vienna Symphony forgoes the overture amuse bouche and gets straight to what is a meaty main course. First, Schumann's Piano Concerto with soloist Yuja Wang, and then on to Shostakovich's Symphony No 10.

konzerthaus.at/en, takt1.com

Metropolitan Opera, New York & cinemas worldwide

Margaine sings Carmen, February 2

It would appear to be Richard Eyre month, because days after his *La traviata* finishes in London, The Met take up the baton with his production of *Carmen*. Louis Langrée conducts, with a cast headed by Clémentine Margaine, who made her Met debut in this

title role back in 2017. Singing her jealous and scorned lover Don José is Roberto Alagna, and the principal cast is completed by Aleksandra Kurzak as Micaëla and Alexander Vingogradov as Escamillo.

met.org.uk

Barbican, London & YouTube

Gardiner conducts Weber, Mendelssohn and Schumann, February 7

Romanticism is the banner under which this LSO guest appearance from Sir John Eliot Gardiner is sailing, and specifically Romanticism with whispers of Classicism about it. First up is Weber's *Euryanthe* Overture. Next, Mendelssohn's youthful Concerto for Violin and Piano, for which Gardiner and the orchestra are joined by two musicians who move effortlessly between the worlds of period and traditional instruments, multi-Gramophone Award winner Isabelle Faust on violin, and Kristian Bezuidenhout at the keyboard. The concert then works up to a climax with Schumann's Beethovenian Symphony No 3, the *Rhenish*. Those catching the concert on the orchestra's YouTube channel also have the option of tuning in early, at 7pm, for a live introduction from backstage.

lso.co.uk

ONLINE OPERA REVIEW

Puccini's Roman opera, premiered in Rome, returns to the city in a staging that references its distinguished past

Puccini

Some 115 years after *Tosca* was first unveiled, this new production of Puccini's evergreen shocker formed part of the Rome Opera's push to explore its past glories – part of a broader trend in the opera world to exhume and revive long-gone stagings. In this case it's the scenery and costumes used at the premiere itself, recreated to give a fascinating glimpse into stage techniques of the time – more trompe-l'œil backcloths than you can shake a fan at. It also reveals how little the basic dramaturgy and design of *Tosca* productions has changed.



But beyond the production itself, faithfully realised by Alessandro Talevi, this is hardly a *Tosca* for the ages. The Teatro dell'Opera orchestra is alarmingly scrappy under Donato Renzetti's lukewarm conducting. Oksana Dyka's

soprano, big but short on warmth and musicality, is a voice it's difficult to fall for, and dramatically she feels like a girl sent to do a woman's job, her 'Vissi d'arte' accompanied by lashings of artful arm-waving. Roberto Frontali is a solidly threatening Scarpia, but the star is the Cavaradossi of Stefano La Colla.

He's no actor either,

granted, but the singing is bright and long-lined, delivering its own sort of Italianate authenticity. **Hugo Shirley**

Available to view, free of charge, until June 12, 2019 at operavision.eu

Orchestra Hall, Detroit & DSOLive

American Panorama, February 8

Detroit Symphony Music Director Leonard Slatkin has now been championing the diverse music of America for five decades, and this month sees him and the orchestra present a three-week festival of this repertoire. We're drawing your attention to the opening concert (which those in Detroit itself can catch in the morning as well as the evening performance being webcast for free), which is a musical travelogue of sorts. Opening proceedings is Morton Gould's *Star Spangled Banner* overture. Then come Joan Tower's *Sequoia*, Bernstein's Three Meditations from *Mass* with the orchestra's Principal Cellist Wei Yu as soloist, and Virgil Thomson's Suite from *The Plough that Broke the Plains*. The concert concludes with Ferde Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*.

dso.org

Philharmonie Berlin & Digital Concert Hall

Bruckner from Janowski, February 1

Marek Janowski returns to the Berlin Phil with a double-bill of music by Bruckner, of whom he's becoming much prized as an interpreter (maybe taking up the mantle of Günter Wand). The concert ends with the Sixth Symphony but before it comes a Bruckner rarity, not played by the BPO since 1972, the Mass No 2 in E minor which dispenses with the orchestral strings, using just wind instruments. Doing the vocal honours are the splendid Rundfunkchor Berlin.

digitalconcerthall.com

Gothenburg Concert Hall & GSoplay

Singing Swans, February 15

This, in our opinion, is one of the most interesting programmes on these pages this month, so all the better that it's also one of the freeview ones. Featuring the Gothenburg Symphony under its Artistic Director and Chief Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali, it opens with the pounding rhythms of the Swedish composer Daniel Nelson's *Steampunk Blizzard*: a work that, despite only dating from 2016, is notching up an increasingly healthy-looking tally of performances. Next comes the Icelandic composer Daníel Bjarnson's Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra (2007-8), with soloist Martin Grubinger. Then the evening concludes with Sibelius's Symphony No 5, written during the First World War and inspired by swans in the Finnish archipelago.

gso.se/en/gsoplay

Philharmonie Berlin & Digital Concert Hall

Nézet-Séguin conducts Prokofiev, February 15

Orchestral colour illuminates Yannick Nézet-Séguin's programme with the Berlin Phil. Debussy's *La mer*, which has been a favourite

ONLINE CONCERT REVIEW

If you enjoyed Teodor Currentzis's *Pathétique*, then try this ...



Tchaikovsky

The YouTube stream of the newly merged SWR Symphony Orchestra features a growing library of performances with its hot-property chief since last September, Teodor Currentzis. The newest volumes on the digital shelf are drawn from a pre-Christmas concert tour of Schnittke (the Viola Concerto) and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, which will be required watching for anyone enthralled by the conductor's *Pathétique* on record (1/18).

As in the Sixth, Currentzis makes telling use of silence in the symphony's introduction. He has the score in front of him but departs from it in unmarked diminuendo/crescendo waves that nevertheless work with and not against the grain of a passionately argued first movement. The sudden access of intimacy they create also lends wonder and stillness

to the coda of the slow movement, which is paced with all the freedom permitted by Tchaikovsky, and launched by a poised but beautifully muted horn solo.

Indeed all the solo winds are on the same page as their new chief, and the musically sensitive filming shows Currentzis communicating with a body language which is at least as supple and eloquent as his (batonless) hands. His German players are well placed to interpret the most Mendelssohnian aspects of both the score and their conductor's approach to it, most strikingly at the Fifth's weakest point, the finale's coda, which is brought home to berth like a triumphant *Scottish* Symphony, buoyant and liberated.

Peter Quantrill

Available to view free of charge at

youtu.be/8-LH6BTtDqA or search for Currentzis Tchaikovsky 5

of the orchestra's chief conductors from Herbert von Karajan onwards, forms the centrepiece. Ravel's *Menuet antique* opens the concert while Prokofiev's vivid and richly hued Fifth Symphony (the work that Karajan recorded to much acclaim) closes the evening. It was Prokofiev's return to writing symphonies after a gap of 15 years and which won him the Stalin Prize 1st Class.

digitalconcerthall.com

Bavarian State Opera, Munich & StaatsOper.tv

Karl V, February 23

Completed in 1938, Ernst Krenek's *Karl V* doesn't suffer from over-performance, probably not least because it's written using a strict 12-tone technique. However,

what it lacks in hummability it makes up for in sheer intellectual heft, beginning with the sophisticated libretto written by Krenek himself. Perhaps this is why this new production from La Fura dels Baus's Carlus Padrissa is actually the National Theater's second staging of it. Karl V himself was the last emperor to hold to the idea of a Christian empire on which the sun never set, and Krenek presents him to us as he reflects on his life and makes his confession to a young monk below Titian's *Last Supper*. Bo Skovhus sings the title role, with Anne Schwanewilms as his sister Isabella, and Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacke as Franz I. Erik Nielsen, who studied both the harp and oboe at New York's Juilliard, conducts.

staatsoper.de, staatsoper.de/en

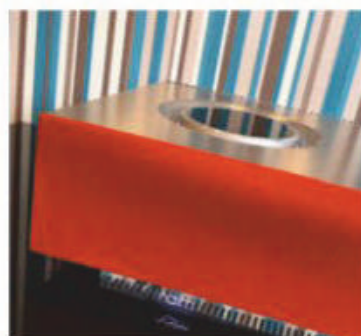
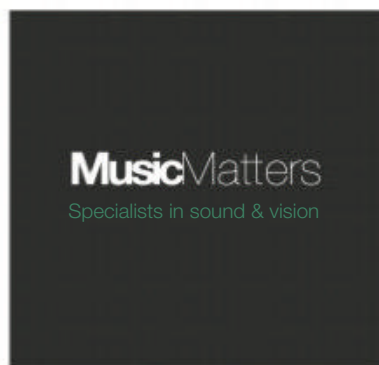
Oranges & Lemons

of Battersea

Home Cinema Hi-Fi & Streaming Multi-Room

020 7924 2040

www.oandlhifi.co.uk 61-63 Webbs Road London SW11 6RX



Visit our website or call us for advice...
musicmatters.co.uk

Birmingham	0121 429 2811
Solihull	0121 742 0254
Leamington Spa	01926 888 644
London	020 8420 1925
Stratford	01789 414 533



Est. 1970

IAN EDWARDS

OF HARROGATE Est. 1970

Tel: **01423 500442**

for sales/enquiries or FREE brochure call - 01423 500442
www.iansbespokefurniture.co.uk



Handmade Bespoke Furniture
for CD's • LP's • DVD's & Books

The Old Chapel, 282 Skipton Road,
Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 3HE

020 7226 5500
www.grahams.co.uk



"One of the five best hi-fi
shops in the world"
ARENA Magazine

Grahams Hi-Fi
Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road
London N1 7BS

Ian Harrison HI FI Sale!
UP TO 40% OFF!

SPECIALIST SUPPLIER OF TURNTABLES, TONEARMS,
CARTRIDGES, PHONO STAGES, RECORD CLEANING
MACHINES, HEADPHONES & CABLES
TEL: 01283 702875 (UK) 9AM - 9PM
EMAIL: IAN.HARRISON@MERCIAN.MYZEN.CO.UK

the solution

Loud Too Loud Way Too Loud

Excess gain in a system is a common problem, but it can be cured using Rothwell In-Line Attenuators. 1000's of satisfied customers worldwide.

£39/pair

01204 366133 www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk

**To
ADVERTISE
IN THIS
SECTION
PLEASE
CALL
020
7501
6368**

HIGH FIDELITY

● THE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES THE MOST OF YOUR MUSIC ●



THIS MONTH A new app-driven network player from a top British name, and the multiroom system you may have overlooked

Andrew Everard,
Audio Editor

FEBRUARY TEST DISCS



The Vienna New Year's Day concert is a perennial favourite, and the 2019 version sparkles in 96kHz/24bit sound, with a joyful sense of occasion.



A beautiful recital inspired by personal grief, this set by Igor Levit really shines in the huge dynamic range of 96kHz-24bit, with every nuance clear.

Reinventing a bestselling range

KEF is the latest company to reinvent one of its most popular line-ups, creating the new R Series



Even if you don't examine the numerous changes – 1043 of them, we're told – that have taken place under their skin, the speakers in the new KEF R Series range **1** grab the attention with their style. Here we have drive units colour-coded to the finishes of the main cabinet – gloss black or white, or walnut – and similarly styled grille-cloths to ensure a perfect match. Not just that, but rather than just relying on the mesh of the grilles to let the sound through, KEF has introduced microperforations in front of the drivers, giving a striking shadow appearance when the suede-effect covers are in place.

Behind them is a newly revised version of the Uni-Q 'two-in-one' concentric driver, with a tweeter in the throat of the midrange unit: in this 12th generation Uni-Q, the motor has been redesigned to improve the midrange, and the spacing and damping of the two drivers has been improved.

The bass drivers have also been reworked, with greater excursion, less distortion and a more rigid cone allowing the use of smaller drivers without sacrificing bass. The cabinets use Constrained Layer Damping, which employs lossy couplings between braces and the cabinet walls, while flexible ports are used to avoid midrange coloration. The six-strong range, which includes dedicated centre channel and

Dolby Atmos effects speakers, starts with the R3, at £1300 a pair, and goes up to the £4000/pr R11 floorstanders.

Also new from KEF is the LSX **2**, a smaller, more affordable version of the company's LS50 wireless speaker system. Offering both network streaming and access to online services including Spotify and Tidal, the speakers also have Bluetooth and Apple AirPlay wireless connectivity, and pack two Class D amplifiers in each speaker, powering a KEF Uni-Q drive unit. The LSX sells for £1000.

Also following the 'system in a speaker' route is French manufacture Cabasse, rivaling compatriot Devialet's Phantom with The Pearl **3**, a spherical speaker combining a 13cm coaxial drive unit with an integrated 25cm subwoofer, powered by a total of 1600W of internal amplification. It has Ethernet and Wi-Fi networking, plus a USB port and analogue and digital inputs, and can be controlled using either a programmable handset or a smartphone app. It sells for £2599.

Musical Fidelity has a new owner, now being under the umbrella of Austrian-based Audio Tuning, which is also the parent company of turntable manufacturer Pro-Ject. The first products under the new regime are the M2si integrated amplifier and M2sCD player **4**, selling for £799 apiece. The company says 'they boast an

intimidating industrial façade', behind which is technology trickled down from the flagship Titan models: the 76W per channel M2si uses a Class A preamp with its own power supply to feed two discrete power amps, but despite the new ownership has no phono stage: instead there are six line-level inputs.

The M2sCD uses both a mains choke filter and a digital stream noise filter, and employs 24bit Delta-Sigma conversion with 8x oversampling, derived from further up the Musical Fidelity range. The two are available in black or silver, and come with a system remote handset.

Talking of Pro-Ject, the company has introduced a redesigned record cleaning arm, the £55 Sweep-IT E **5**. Made from aluminium and with a heavy base that simply sits on a turntable's plinth, it's designed to sweep a record ahead of the stylus, removing dust and reducing surface noise.

Finally this month cable specialist The Chord Company has revised its Rumour and Shawline speaker cables: RumourX and ShawlineX use a new XLPE insulator **6**, which it says offers significant advantages over the more common PTFE, identified over extensive listening at the company's Wiltshire factory. RumourX sells for £18/m, and ShawlineX is £30/m. **G**

● REVIEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Naim ND5 XS 2

The entry-level model in Naim's new network player range is a simplified design, with no display and control via an app. The performance however is a different matter ...

Having more or less invented the all-in-one network music system with the launch of its NaimUniti in 2009 – yes, it really was almost a decade ago – Naim extended the concept into a range of derivative systems, refreshed with an all-new line-up a couple of years back. As well as new services and features, the current Unitis are built on what Naim calls its 'platform for the future', which is designed to accommodate any changes in formats or services occurring down the line. Now this technology has come to the new Naim network player range, launched midway through last year, the new models having all the facilities of the Unitis and being designed to match the three levels of the Naim hierarchy: the si/XS series, the Classic products and the Reference range.

At the Reference end, the new network player is the ND555, which will set you back £19,998 complete with the 555PS power supply from which it is powered, while the Classic model is the NDX2, selling for £4999, and upgradable using the £3999 XPS DR power supply, or the £6599 555PS used by the ND555.

The ND5 XS 2 we have here is the entry-level model: selling for £2299, it's designed to match the slimline NAIT XS2 integrated amplifier, as well as the less expensive NAIT 5si amp and the CD5si. But getting the new-style Naim streamer technology into the slim casework created its own problems, as the ND555 and NDX2 both use the same large, full-colour



NAIM ND5 XS 2

Type Network music player

Price £2299

Sources UPnP streaming, Spotify Connect, Tidal, vTuner Internet radio, Roon, other streaming services via Chromecast Audio

File formats played PCM-base files to 384kHz/32bit, DSD64/128

Inputs Two optical and two coaxial digital, two USB-A ports for storage devices, Bluetooth with aptX, AirPlay

Networking Ethernet, dual-band Wi-Fi

Output Coax digital, analogue on RCA phonos and DIN

Remote control via Naim app on tablet/smartphone

Accessories included DIN-to-DIN interconnect, BNC-to-RCA adapter, Power-Line Lite mains cable, Bluetooth antenna, two Wi-Fi antennae

Dimensions (WxHxD) 43.2x6.7x30.3cm
naimaudio.com

displays used in the 'new Uniti' models, replacing the small green on black displays of the original Naim streamers.

The solution? Simple, really: the ND5 XS 2 doesn't have a display. Or indeed any controls beyond a power

button on the front panel, along with a tiny LED to indicate network connection and a slot into which one can put a USB stick full of music, or to which your iPhone can be connected.

Instead, the new player is controlled completely by Naim's excellent app, available as a free download for iOS or Android smartphones and tablets. Refined over many years since the first NaimUniti appeared, this can now control ND-players both old and new, all the Uniti models from the first to the latest, and of course Naim's hugely popular Muso and Muso Qb all-in-one network speaker systems. What's more, it's possible to set up a complete multiroom audio package using any mix of the products, so one could have a main room system fronted by an ND555 or the previous NDS, a study set-up of a Uniti and a pair of speakers, and a Muso in the kitchen or wherever.

So what does the ND 5 XS 2 offer? Well, like all of the new players, it will play music from USB memory, network storage or online services including Spotify Connect and Tidal, as well as internet radio using the vTuner platform, while onboard Chromecast audio allows it to stream from hundreds of smartphone/tablet apps. Music streaming extends all the way up to 384kHz/32bit and DSD128/5.6MHz, while there are also digital inputs – two optical, coaxial and BNC – enabling conventional digital sources to be connected at up to 192kHz/24bit.

There's also both Bluetooth and Apple AirPlay wireless connectivity for portable

HI-FI | HOME CINEMA | AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS



Based conveniently in central Guildford PJ Hi-Fi has specialised in the demonstration, provision and installation of quality hi-fi and home cinema for over 20 years. Our dedicated demonstration rooms allow you to listen in comfort to a range of exceptional products, whilst our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always on hand to answer any questions you may have. Whether you are looking for your first genuine hi-fi system, want to create a bespoke home cinema or wish to distribute music and movie throughout your house, PJ Hi-Fi can provide a solution to suit all budgets and criteria. As a truly independent retailer we are proud to say that we hand select, test and scrutinise all the products that we supply, ensuring a consistent standard of quality and reliability over our entire range of equipment. Drop in today to discuss your requirements or phone / email us to book a demonstration.

Tel: 01483 504801 | www.pjhifi.co.uk | Email: info@pjhifi.co.uk
3 Bridge Street | Guildford | Surrey GU1 4RY



SUGGESTED PARTNERS

Given the performance of the ND5 XS 2, a high-quality partnering system is required. Try these ...

NAIT XS 2

The obvious complement is the NAIT XS 2 integrated amplifier, offering a similarly slimline design and a sound with plenty of punch and refinement



BOWERS & WILKINS 603

A wide range of speakers will work well with the Naim pairing, but the new Bowers & Wilkins 603 floorstanders would be a particularly good choice



devices and computers, along with both Wi-Fi and Ethernet networking. Although Naim has worked hard on maximising the product's Wi-Fi capability, Ethernet remains the optimal choice for stability and reliability, especially if you want to stream high-res music.

In addition the ND5 XS 2 is Roon-ready, meaning it can act as an endpoint for a system running Roon on a connected computer or NAS, offering an alternative means of control complete with Roon's excellent tagging, content information and more.

Analogue outputs are provided using a choice of Naim's preferred five-pin DIN or conventional RCA phonos, with a signal ground switch able to 'float' the ground in case of hum problems – while there's also a remote control output allowing a suitable Naim amp to be controlled via the app. There's an extra USB socket to the rear, to which a hard drive could be attached for local storage of music, for example, and there are no fewer than three antenna mounts – two for Wi-Fi and one for Bluetooth – for which stub antennae are provided.

Like all the new Naim network products, the ND5 XS 2 supports 'over the air' updating for firmware and code to enhance performance – the original products had a slightly laborious process involving a computer connected via both a serial cable and Ethernet – meaning it will be simple to keep the product up-to-date with the latest formats and so on.

PERFORMANCE

The Naim was slotted into my system in place of my usual NDS/555PS player, which was last sold at something approaching six times its price, so I was justifiably expecting a major fall in sound quality; in addition I was sure this 'entry-level' model would be a long way off the NDX2 I have been trying of late, especially when the pricier player is used with one of Naim's offboard power supplies.

However, while the ND5 XS 2 does give something away to them in terms of bass extension and conviction, not to mention the finer nuances of detail and soundstage imaging, you'd never guess it

when listening to the player in isolation, so convincing is the manner in which it plays music. Used with my SuperNAIT 2/HiCap DR amplifier and PMC OB1 speakers, it delivered a presentation of music both powerful and with excellent vitality, creating a broad, deep soundstage and a realistic impression of the position of performers within it.

The sound is typical of the current crop of Naim products, being both fast and generous

The sound is typical of the current crop of Naim products, being both fast and generous, with nothing of the old 'forward and only for rock music' stereotype, erroneous though it was, in evidence here. Instead it proves itself fast and rhythmically adept, for example with Dana Zemtsov's Channel Classics recording of Bartók's Viola Concerto in DSD127, where the crisp delivery of the solo instrument is set against the orchestra with impressive clarity. The recording also illustrates well the expansive dynamics the Naim can muster, as does Víkingur Ólafsson's Johann Sebastian Bach set on DG: the Naim works well with the 192kHz/24bit recording to bring out the speed, precision and drama of the performances.

Yes, the ND5 XS 2 might lack a little of the sheer scale and insight the top-end Naim network players can bring to bear, but it still impresses with large-scale orchestral music, as is clear with the final movement of Mahler's First Symphony in the Fischer/Budapest Festival Orchestra recording in DSD64. The rhythmic dexterity, dynamic range and power of the sound are all much in evidence, and the result is as thrilling as it is involving.

In fact, anyone expecting the entry-level Naim streamer to come in poverty specification is going to be sorely disappointed. This minimalist little component punches way above its weight, and is superbly musical – maybe removing the display plays a significant part in the quite remarkable performance on offer here. **G**

Or you could try...

Some Naim fanatics have suggested that a rival for the ND5 XS 2 would be a used Naim NDS, as a few of this last-generation player have appeared for sale in the £3000-£4000 range. However, this overlooks the NDS's requirement for an offboard power supply.

Marantz ND8006

A more sensible rival would be the excellent Marantz



ND8006, which combines CD playback with a full suite of streaming functionality, including all the popular services and file playback well into the realms of ultra-high resolution. It also has HEOS multiroom to match the Naim's abilities in this area, and happens to sell for around half the price of the ND5 XS 2. For more information see **marantz.co.uk**

Pioneer N-70AE

Pioneer's N-70AE lacks the CD playback and multiroom capability of the Marantz, but is otherwise similarly equipped when it comes to the range of streaming services and file formats it supports, all the way up into very high resolution formats including DSD256/11.2MHz. It also sells for around the same price as the Marantz, undercutting the Naim by a healthy margin. See more at **pioneer-audiovisual.eu**



Naim Uniti Nova

Of course, if you were considering the Naim and its matching NAIT XS 2 amplifier, which sells for just under £2000, the company's flagship all-in-one unit, the Uniti Nova, may divert your attention for around the same price as the two units together. It remains to be seen how the sound would compare in a direct comparison, but the Nova is very good indeed, and offers that one-box convenience.



naimaudio.com

REVIEW IFI AUDIO XDSD

Bring your headphones to life

A very superior DAC/headphone amplifier you can slip into your pocket – who'd expect anything less from this highly innovative digital audio company?

With the apparently unstoppable boom in headphone listening, which has moved from the domain of the hi-fi-obsessed to become truly mainstream, has come a 'sub-boom' in devices designed to make the most of the performance of these personal audio products.

British-based iFi audio has been heavily involved in this area of the market since it launched in 2012; headquartered in Southport, Merseyside, it's a subsidiary of Abbingdon Music Research, and is thus able to draw on the same technical and research resources. Indeed, for a while AMR stepped back from the business of high-end audio to concentrate on the portable market with iFi audio, but is planning a return this year with an all-new range of hi-fi separates. And if they're as striking as the little iFi audio xDSD we have here, they'll have been worth the wait.

Selling for £399, the xDSD is by no means the least expensive DAC/headphone amp on the market, but it is iFi audio's most advanced design of its kind, not to mention its most stylish, its scalloped gloss black casework also serving the useful purpose of making it easier to grip.

Inside is digital-to-analogue conversion able to handle formats up to 192kHz/24bit via its combination 3.5mm optical/coaxial/digital input, and all the way through to 768Khz PCM (for 'double DSD' recordings) and DSD512 [24.6/22.6MHz] when connected using its full-size USB port. The latter input is unusual on a compact DAC of this kind, and various adapters and cables are provided to make use of it, as is a Toslink/miniToslink converter for the optical in; there's also a microUSB socket, but this is purely for charging the built-in 3.8V/2200mAh battery.

There's MQA decoding onboard, and the xDSD can also accept music wirelessly via Bluetooth with aptX from portable devices, or you can connect direct to the USB input using the Apple Camera Connection Kit with the USB cable provided, or an Android OnTheGo cable.

Files are handled in native form by the digital-to-analogue conversion inside the xDSD, which uses a Burr-Brown TrueNative chipset, complete with a choice of transient-optimised linear phase 'Listen'



SPECIFICATION

IFI AUDIO XDSD

Type Portable DAC/headphone amplifier

Price £399

Inputs Optical/coaxial digital, USB Type B, Bluetooth

Output 3.5mm analogue out, with fixed/variable selection

Other connections microUSB for charging, 6-8 hours use from a full charge

File formats PCM to 192kHz/24bit on optical/coaxial, PCM to 768kHz and DSD to DSD512 on USB

Accessories supplied Various adapters and cables for signal and charging

Dimensions [WxHxD] 6.65x1.9x9.5cm

Weight 127g

ifi-audio.com

filter and a flat-response 'Measure' setting. The suggestion from iFi is that one uses the former for the most enjoyable sound, and I can't help but agree: to these ears the 'Measure' filter sounded rather – well, flat.

Downstream of this conversion iFi audio has decided to do things the hard way in the quest for the best possible sound. Rather than chopping the signal up in DSP, the Cyberdrive amplification and volume control stage – which by the way allows both conventional and balanced headphones to be used – are handled in the analogue domain, albeit under digital control: so, for example, the volume control is a conventional – if tiny – stepped attenuator. Similarly analogue are the sound enhancements on offer here: the 3D+ setting uses what are described as 'Holographic dual-analogue matrices' to create the impression of a deeper, more three-dimensional soundstage, while XBass+ is designed to deliver a deeper, tighter low end.

Despite its compact dimensions, the xDSD is designed with plenty of power to drive even demanding headphone loads: this

isn't a product only for simple earbuds, but on test drove some very high-end headsets without any sign of strain – and to very high levels while retaining clarity and focus.

PERFORMANCE

Back in the October issue I tested the xDSD's biggest brother, the mains-powered Pro iDSD, and while this pack-of-cards-sized stablemate isn't going to challenge that enthusiast/studio unit, the same DNA is very much in evidence in the rather more portable device. It's easier to use, too – shorn of the Pro iDSD's sometimes baffling array of features, the xDSD manages with just two tiny buttons, one switch and a volume control, with indicators provided by two minute multicolour LEDs and changing hues of the central company logo. Despite this simplicity, one can choose to use or avoid those audio effects, switch between Bluetooth and wired inputs, and even defeat the volume control to allow the xDSD to be used straight into an amplifier. It's a clever user interface, and after only a short period of studying the well-organised (and short!) manual becomes totally intuitive.

And whether used as 'just a DAC' or driving headphones, this little package is entirely convincing: its sound is rich and spacious – even without the effects dialled in – and yet closely detailed, giving an excellent insight into the techniques of performance and recording while maintaining complete musical involvement. Whether playing a BBC Radio 3 stream via computer or phone, or handling a DSD256 album such as Florelegium's set of Telemann's concertos on Channel Classics, the xDSD takes the listener into the heart of the performance – and yes, would make anyone buying these 'super DSD' recordings glad they made the investment.

The sheer presence and fluidity is, if anything, even more impressive than all the detail on offer, while the assured handling of dynamics allows a crisp, clean, 'listen through' kind of presentation that's entirely enthralling, and makes some lesser devices of this kind sound rather like they're having to work a bit hard. That in itself makes the xDSD well worth the price of admission – the extreme cuteness, achieved without sonic compromise, is just the bonus. **G**

● ESSAY

A large, and very versatile, Cast

Yamaha's MusicCast system was one of the very first forays into consumer multiroom, and these days it's grown into a huge, and very flexible system

Although it's probably not a description its manufacturer will thank me for using, Yamaha's MusicCast system is one of the hidden secrets of multiroom audio, at least by the standards of general public perception. Yet while it may not be as well-known as the most celebrated ranges – you know, the two that each end with '...os' – the line-up from the huge Japanese maker of everything from musical instruments to hi-fi, and from motorbikes to outboard motors for boats, is both one of the most extensive available, and certainly the most flexible.

After all, while Sonos is the market-leader in this sector, and put its first products on the shelves in 2005, that was still a couple of years behind Yamaha's first MusicCast – an all-in-one player unit and a satellite speaker system. And although rival HEOS, which came from Denon, is now becoming available in a range of products from both its erstwhile parent and stablemate Marantz – as I pointed out in my review of the Denon DNP-800NE last month – Yamaha has been offering MusicCast in its AV receivers for a while now. It also has the kind of adapter units to interface with existing hi-fi systems that its two rivals boast, but neither HEOS nor Sonos can interface with musical instruments, as Yamaha does by combining its little WXAD-10 wireless streaming adapter with its range of Clavinova pianos.

It doesn't end there: using the Yamaha Disklavier Enspire piano, it's even possible to stream the sound of the instrument to any MusicCast speakers you have around the home – and all wirelessly, using your existing Wi-Fi network. And of course, since Yamaha, as well as having its own grand piano factory in its home city in Japan, also owns the 190-year-old Austrian piano manufacturer Bösendorfer, which thus also has access to the Disklavier Enspire player technology ...

But before we get too carried away with the possibilities, let's come back closer to the audio home with the addition of some new technologies and new models to the MusicCast range, which serve to emphasise just how capable the system has become in an age when music is available on everything from digital physical media to analogue LPs, and from network storage



MusicCast NPS-303 slim streamer, WXAD-10 and VINYL 500



to online streaming services. Of late my attention has been grabbed by some new product announcement from Yamaha, which really seems to be covering all the options when it comes to music playback, while at the same time keeping pace with what's going on in other multiroom offerings. On the latter consideration those with an interest in the latest technologies won't be at all surprised to know that the MusicCast system now interfaces with Amazon Alexa voice control, so one only has to add one of Amazon's Echo devices – which could be as simple as the little Echo Dot – in order to request music from streaming services simply by speaking the instruction.

Neither HEOS nor Sonos can interface with musical instruments, as Yamaha does

This is all done by adding what are called 'skills' to one's Alexa set-up – they're so called because they give the system the ability to do things the user requires. Two skills are available: the simpler one is the 'MusicCast Smart Home Skill' which, once set-up, enables the user to use standard Alexa voice commands to turn MusicCast devices on and off, change volume, select inputs on compatible amplifier and receivers and so on. Meanwhile the 'MusicCast skill' allows a wider range of MusicCast-specific requests, such as linking together rooms in which system devices are placed, asking the system to play a playlist in a specific zone or even, as the Yamaha information suggests, 'Alexa, ask MusicCast to play Angel on the piano.'

What's more, two new speaker models, the MusicCast 20 (or WX-021) at £199, and the larger £449 MusicCast 50 (aka WX-051) come complete with the voice-activation hardware built-in, so you don't even have to add on an Echo

device to get your system responding to your every utterance. Like all the Yamaha multiroom products, they'll play hi-res music up to 192kHz/24bit and have both Bluetooth and Airplay built-in, and in common with other standalone MusicCast speakers, they can be paired up to create a bigger, more room-filling stereo sound – not that much more room-filling will be needed in the case of the larger of the two models.

I am sure such capability will have some users barely able to contain their excitement, while others will be muttering 'Whatever next?', but this is simply a way of turning instructions issued using the MusicCast control app into voice commands, so I guess it's a question of deciding whether you would rather tap, swipe or talk.

Among the more recent MusicCast products to attract the attention are the little WXAD-10 already mentioned, which is a simple box designed to link existing audio systems to the multiroom system: equipped with Wi-Fi and Ethernet connectivity as well as Bluetooth audio, and analogue audio outputs on both a volume-controllable 3.5mm stereo socket and a pair of fixed-level RCA phono sockets, at £149 this is a very cost effective way to try MusicCast, as it will also add internet radio and the likes of Spotify, Tidal, Qobuz, Deezer and Napster to any product with a pair of audio inputs. And even better you can find it at a good bit less than that price without too much effort.

And yes, the MusicCast system even has a turntable, in the form of the £549 VINYL 500: this can be plugged into any amplifier thanks to a built-in phono stage, but will also do all the usual multiroom tricks, including sharing the sound of your LPs around the whole house if you want. And though it can't select a disc from the shelf for you and cue up a track just by voice command, yes – it has Alexa built-in, too! **G**



Johan Dalene,
2017 First Prize.

**THE THOMAS & EVON
COOPER
INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION**

Violin 2019
July 18-26

For ages 13-18
FIRST PRIZE \$20,000
\$40,000 in total cash prizes
Travel assistance available
Finals with The Cleveland Orchestra
Broadcast live on WCLV 104.9 FM

Application deadline: May 7, 2019
More information at www.oberlin.edu/cooper

OBERLIN THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY FRANZ WELSER-MOST
MUSIC DIRECTOR

ROGER MASTROIANNI

Potton Hall Recording Studio

- Set in Suffolk Countryside 5 miles from Southwold
- First class acoustics and facilities
- Steinway Model 'D' Grand Piano available
- A complete CD package available
- Reasonable rates
- Accommodation/Leisure Spa available on site
- Full Brochure available by request

www.pottonhallltd.co.uk | 01728 648265



GRAMOPHONE

**TO ADVERTISE IN
THIS SECTION**

**PLEASE CALL
020 7501 6368**



**0207
689
7533**

**LPs + CDs
BOUGHT**

ANYWHERE IN THE UK
FAIR PRICES PAID
info@watsonrecords.co.uk

WATSON
RECORDS

revolutions

records and cds

*Run by musicians
for music lovers*

We buy classical LPs
From 1950s - 1970s

Examples - we will pay up to:

£2500 for Leonid Kogan on Columbia SAX

£1500 for Johanna Martzy on Columbia 33CX

£4000 for Andre Levy on Lumen

Top prices paid for EMI ASD, Columbia SAX,
Decca SXL.



We will travel to anywhere in
the UK to view sizeable collections
or can buy by post from your lists.

Quality hi-fi equipment purchased -

**EMT - GARRARD - TANNOY -
THORENS Etc.**

CD Collections also purchased

For prompt attention, contact:

Leslie Laine, BA (hons)

or Dr Matthew Pollard

Revolutions, 1st Floor 67 Victoria Road,

Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1UN

email: info@revolutions33.co.uk

Tel: 01903 209553

www.revolutions33.co.uk

Classical LPs/CDs wanted.
Can collect or deal by post.

www.esmetronrecords.com
esmetronrecords@btinternet.com

**TO ADVERTISE IN THIS
SECTION PLEASE CALL
020 7501 6368**



Yarborough House
Bookshop and Coffee House

4,000 CDs Rapidly Changing Stock.
Much unusual repertoire. All guaranteed.

Large secondhand general book stock.

We buy interesting LPs, CDs, DVDs and quality books,
particularly music, philosophy and literature.

Will collect or pay postage.

No mail order.

The Square, Bishops Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BN
Open 5 days 10am - 5pm / Closed Mon & Wed

www.yarboroughhouse.com
01588 638318



SCHOPPER AG
(Switzerland)

The best partner for your Thorens TD 124 !
Restorations & Parts

www.thorens-td124.ch

BUY • SELL • TRADE
vinyl • CDs • DVDs • box sets

nothing legal refused! (ID required)

CLASSICAL MUSIC EXCHANGE

38 Notting Hill Gate, W11, open 7 days 10am - 8pm

www.mgeshops.com



020 7792 5847

**RECORD COLLECTION
FOR SALE.**

About 500 classical records
(78s, EPs and LPs). List available.

Essex. Buyer collects

Contact

stuart@olivercatering.com,
or phone 07860 353 900.

CD MAIL ORDER SERVICE
FREEPHONE 0800 999 6994

Celebrating 11 years as a mail-order service to
those starting their love affair with music, clever
collectors, also to music groups and at concerts.

FREE P&P with your 1st ORDER

Colchester Classics, St Austell,
47 Gladwin Road, Colchester CO2 7HW

FREEPHONE 0800 999 6994

Email: liz@colchesterclassics.co.uk
www.colchesterclassics.co.uk

**COLCHESTER CLASSICS - WHERE
CLASSICAL MUSIC MATTERS!**

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL 020 7501 6368

NOTES & LETTERS

George Szell, 'the greatest' • Hilary Hahn in Beethoven • Scherchen's idiosyncratic Mahler

Write to us at Gramophone, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or gramophone@markallengroup.com

The great George Szell

Keith Pearce (Letters, December, page 156) quoting Otto Klemperer's remark that George Szell was 'a machine' should have completed the sentence: '... but what a machine'. This machine was able to reduce Arthur Rubinstein to tears when he first heard Szell conduct the *Eroica* in Utrecht in the 1930s. Rubinstein added he found the greatest pleasure in listening to recordings of the standard classics by the great, the one and only George Szell (quoted in *My Many Years*, Knopf, 1973). Many would agree. Despite deficiencies in engineering, his recordings are played by me more often than those of any other conductor.

I had the good fortune to see Szell at work, live, on five occasions. Words that come to mind: luminous, magisterial, incandescent, ravishing. Jed Distler is justified in his view that 'George Szell was the greatest 20th-century conductor' (Critics' Choice, December, page 41). Which other conductor has had rave reviews in opera, symphonic repertoire, as an accompanist, and as the builder (in an unlikely location) of an orchestra that at the time of Szell's death was described as the 'world's leading musical organisation' (*The Times*)?

It is little short of a miracle that he could maintain incredible standards against a backdrop of bickering unions and talent leakage to more lucrative positions on the East Coast, devoid of the huge subsidies known to be enjoyed by some of the great European ensembles. Two defecting violinists, one of whom became leader of the Philadelphia, are on record as saying the greatest concert they ever experienced was Szell doing Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony in Basel (May 29, 1957). The same year, the Cleveland made its first appearance at the Royal Festival Hall. A London critic wrote that it was the finest playing ever heard there and doubted whether finer playing had been heard anywhere else.

By 1967, Sir Neville Cardus was able to write that Szell had moved from a 'general and shared musical eminence among living conductors to an eminence on which he stands alone'.

To be branded a perfectionist, as Szell was, usually has detractors crawling out of the woodwork, with words like

Letter of the Month



After Hahn's magnificent solo Bach, our November Recording of the Month, a plea for some Beethoven

Hilary Hahn: lets the music speak for itself

It was wonderful to have Hilary Hahn's completion of her Bach sonatas and partitas (Decca, November, page 32). Could we please persuade her to record the Beethoven sonatas? I know they've been done before, and we have perhaps never had so many fine young violinists recording at the same time as we have now; but although Hahn can be a virtuoso when the music calls for it (witness her Paganini), what is so

special about her playing is her ability (Arthur Grumiaux had it too) to make the music seem to speak for itself; she has no need to show off what she can do with it, or to it. This matters in Beethoven. While I'm being greedy, let's have all the Mozart sonatas too. (Only please don't wait another 20 years: I'm 79!)

John Hart
Chelmsford, Essex

prestoclassical.co.uk is a website that speaks your language, 'underpinned by an evident love of music and the world of recordings' (Gramophone). No other site selling classical CDs and DVDs is arranged in such a logical and accessible format, where you can easily find lists of composers' works, compare different options, view recommendations and read reviews. We believe you will find it one of the most user-friendly classical music sites on the internet. The Letter of the Month receives £50 of Presto Classical gift vouchers. Gramophone reserves the right to edit letters for publication

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

'mechanical' and 'cold' being bandied about. The same thing happened to Heifetz. But behind both these musicians is a burning passion. One online reviewer aptly described Szell's passion as chaste. Look also at Myron Bloom, again online, for an illuminating commentary on Szell's phenomenal musical memory.

I agree with the Rev Ian Harper (January, page 124) that there are many wonderful live concert performances of Szell. The 1970 Tokyo Sibelius Second from the dying conductor is particularly astonishing. There is also a treasure-trove of live opera from the Met and Salzburg.

Fortunately we do not have to limit ourselves to only one musician to satisfy our taste of the moment but, if forced to choose, would I trade in Heifetz for any other violinist? No. Would I trade in Szell for any other conductor? No.

To quote Richard Strauss of the young Szell: 'There is no one finer than Szell – with Szell you get the jackpot.'

David Fenton
London

Scherchen's mad Mahler

I was pleased to see a review of the Document box-set of Mahler recordings

by Hermann Scherchen (Replay, January, page 103). One of the great pleasures of CD-collecting is accessing past performances, and Document is particularly generous in its offerings. You can listen to Scherchen's extraordinary performance of, say, Mahler's Fifth for roughly the price of half a cup of coffee on the high street. The whole 10-CD box can be bought for about the price of a modern performance by a provincial German orchestra of one of the shorter symphonies. The Scherchen performances are utterly wild.

Tonal beauty, even with the Philadelphia orchestra in 1960, is off the menu. The *Adagietto* of No 5 lasts a bizarre 15 minutes (Solti's recording, live from Chicago – one of his best Mahler performances – lasts a little over seven minutes) and is just horrible in itself but in the context of the whole mad performance has a sort of compulsion – like one of Webern's very slow miniatures, but brutally extended. We are miles from Mahler as a sort of composer of orchestral showpieces – this hits his raw originality. It's difficult to stop listening once you start playing these discs, and I am afraid that is just not the case with many modern renditions, which would be enjoyable and even moving if encountered in the concert hall but offer no special insights. Maybe – or even probably – these Scherchen performances

would not be ones you would wish to return to often but, at this very small price, anyone interested in Mahler or indeed in Scherchen himself will be richly rewarded.

I have an extensive collection of many such weird and sometimes wonderful past performances from this source and any listener who is introduced to the label by the review will have, for a very modest cost, a huge amount of musical interest and often a sense of deep satisfaction.

Mike Wells

Worthing, West Sussex

Editorial note

The photograph purporting to be the pianist Robert Casadesus (December, page 72), was clearly not of him. Here, to set the record straight, is the real Robert Casadesus ...



Riccardo Chailly: 40 years on Decca

The Italian maestro talks to Neil Fisher about his extraordinary career, including his current Music Directorship of La Scala, Milan, and his vast recording legacy for Decca – to which he has now added Italian cinema music from the mid-1900s

Gabriel Jackson's Passion for our time

The choral composer tells Editor Martin Cullingford about his new work for Merton College, Oxford

Porgy and Bess

David Gutman explores the controversial history on record of Gershwin's 'American folk opera' and chooses his favourite recording

GRAMOPHONE

ON SALE FEBRUARY 27

DON'T MISS IT!

OBITUARIES

Arditti viola player and violinist; South African composer based in UK

LEVINE ANDRADE

Viola player and violinist

Born November 12, 1954

Died November 20, 2018



Born in India, Andrade emigrated to the UK as a boy and became one of the first 12 pupils at the Yehudi Menuhin School where he studied with

Menuhin and Robert Masters; he also studied the viola with Patrick Ireland. In 1974, he became a founder member of the Arditti Quartet alongside Irvine Arditti, Lennox Mackenzie and John Senter. Basing their approach on the American LaSalle Quartet, the Arditti focused on contemporary music, working closely with living composers. Andrade played in the Arditti Quartet for 16 years, leaving the

ensemble in 1990 to pursue freelance conducting and composition.

JOHN JOUBERT

Composer

Born March 20, 1927

Died January 7, 2019



The composer John Joubert has died at the age of 91. Born in South Africa, Joubert studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and remained in the UK.

He lectured for 36 years at Hull and Birmingham Universities before, in 1986, dedicating himself to composition. Among his large output are three symphonies, four concertos and seven stage works. His music has frequently been recorded, including his opera *Jane Eyre* by Somm (6/17) and *St Mark Passion* by Resonus (11/17).

NEW RELEASES INDEX

The latest releases on CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray and download

Key: ƒ Full price £10 and over Ƨ Medium price £7.76 – £9.99 Ɓ Budget price £6.25 – £7.75 Ƨ Super-budget price up to £6.24 Ɔ Reissue Ƨ Historic Ƨ SACD Ƨ DVD Ƨ Blu-ray Ƨ LP

CD & SACD

ACCENTUS

Bach, JS Cantatas Nos 17, 33 & 99. *Sols/Leipzig Thomanerchor/Saxony Baroque Orch/Schwarz.* ƒ **ACC30471**

Szymanowski Vn Conc No 1 **Zemlinsky** Lyric Sym. *Winkel/Nagy/Vähälä/Polish Nat RSO/Liebreich.* ƒ **ACC30470**

ALPHA *outhere-music.com/alpha*

Brahms Schöne Magelone. *Chest/Amaral.* ƒ **ALPHA431**

Haydn Sym, Vol 7. *Basel CO/Antonini.* ƒ **ALPHA680**

Messiaen Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus. *Helmchen.* Ɓ ② **ALPHA423**

Offenbach Colorature. *Devos/Munich Rad Orch/Campellone.* ƒ **ALPHA437**

Sibelius Sym No 1. En saga. *Gothenburg SO/Rouvali.* ƒ **ALPHA440**

Various Cpsrs Dubhlinn Gardens – Wks for Fl & Ens. *Besson/Van Mechelen/A Nocte Temporis.* ƒ **ALPHA447**

Various Cpsrs Opéra des opéras. *Sols incl Watson, Deshayes & Van Mechelen/Concert Spirituel/Niquet.* ƒ **ALPHA442**

Various Cpsrs Venez chère ombre. *Zaïcik/Le Consort/Taylor.* ƒ **ALPHA439**

ANIMAL MUSIC

Bach, JS Solo Vc Stes. *Bárta.* ƒ ② **ANIO762**

APR *aprrecordings.co.uk*

Various Cpsrs Cpte Studio Recs (r1927-50). *Lévy/Staub.* Ɓ ② Ɔ **APR6028**

ARCANA *outhere-music.com/en/labels/arcana*

Bach, JS Solo Vc Stes. *Valli.* ƒ ③ **A459**

Corelli Sols & Concs Fitted for the Flutes. *Estro Conatico/Scorticati.* ƒ **A112**

Dvořák. Tchaikovsky Serenades. *Archi di Santa Cecilia/Piovano.* ƒ **A457**

Various Cpsrs Extravagantes Seicento – Vn & Va da gamba
Sons. *Girandole Armoniche.* ƒ **A113**

ARTA *czecheverything.co.uk*

Bach, JS Wohltemperirte Clavier, Book 2. *Lukšaitė-Mrázková.* Ƨ ② **F10232**

ARTHAUS MUSIK

Handel Rinaldo (pp2014). *Sols/Lautten Compagney Berlin/Katschner.* ƒ ② **109 380**

AUDITE *audite.de*

Liszt Sardanapolo. Mazeppa. *Sols/Weimar Staatskapelle/Karabits.* ƒ **AUDITE97 764**

Schubert Impromptus. *Yilmaz.* ƒ **AUDITE20 037**

Various Cpsrs Rad Recs, Vol 3 (bp1961-74). *Bolet.* Ƨ ③ **AUDITE21 459**

BELVEDERE *belvedere-edition.com*

Haas Sieben Klangräume **Mozart** Requiem. *Sols/Mozarteum Orch, Salzburg/Bolton.* ƒ **BVE08047**

BIS *bis.se*

Bach, CPE Cpte Kybd Wks, Vol 37. *Spányi.* ƒ **BIS2331**

Fauré Pf Wks. *Stavy.* ƒ Ƨ **BIS2389**

Hoffmeister. Rossini Qts with Db, Vol 2. *Pensola/Tikkanen/Lehto/de Groot.* ƒ Ƨ **BIS2318**

Mahler Sym No 2. *Hughes/Cooke/Minnesota Chorale & Orch/Vänskä.* ƒ Ƨ **BIS2405**

Various Cpsrs Oscillating Revenge of the Background Insts.
ORBI. ƒ **BIS2297**

B RECORDS *b-records.fr*

Brahms Cpte Chbr Wks, Vol 3 – Wks with Wind Insts. *Le Sage.* ƒ **LBM015**

Various Cpsrs Sept Particules. *Le Consort/Taylor.* ƒ **LBM014**

BRIDGE *bridgerecords.com*

Various Cpsrs From Hungary to Taiwan. *Formosa Qt.* ƒ **BRIDGE9519**

BRILLIANT CLASSICS

Brahms Songs (r2007). *Volle.* Ƨ ③ Ɔ **95916**

Brescianello Mandora Wks. *Tokodi.* Ƨ **95869**

Carlevaro Gtr Wks. *Cappelli.* Ƨ ② **95684**

Debussy Chansons de Bilitis. *Lombardi/Magadis Ens.* Ƨ **95678**

Dussek Cpte Pf Sons, Vol 5. *Brunner.* Ƨ **95605**

Franck Edn. *Various artists.* Ƨ (23 discs) **95793**

Giuliani Gtr Solo & Chbr Wks. *Cardi.* Ƨ **95813**

Lobo Sacred Voc Wks. *Coro Victoria/Fernández-Vega.* Ƨ **95789**

Lonati Cpte Sinf. *Ens Giardino di Delizie/Augustynowicz.* Ƨ ② **95590**

Luchesi Pf Sons, Op 1. *Plano.* Ƨ **95811**

Molinaro Danze e fantasia, Book 1. *Nastrucci.* Ƨ **95401**

Monteverdi Cpte Madrigals. *Nuove Musiche/Koetsveld.* Ƨ ⑫ Ɔ **95661**

Pachelbel Cpte Kybd Wks. *Stella.* Ƨ ⑬ **95623**

Pelazza Org Wks. *Macera.* Ƨ **95516**

Rolla Va Concs. Sym. Tantum ergo. *Braconi/Il Demetrio CO/Schiavo.* Ƨ **95504**

Tartini Sons & Sinf. *Ens Il Demetrio/Schiavo.* Ƨ **95398**

Wolf-Ferrari Pf Wks. *Catena.* Ƨ **95868**

Various Cpsrs Neapolitan Cantatas. *Dorigo/Ledda/Catania/Morelli.* Ƨ **95778**

Various Cpsrs Tribute to Teresa de Rogatis – Gtr Wks. *Milani.* Ƨ **95627**

Various Cpsrs Vc Sons. *Veggetti/Ens Cordia.* Ƨ **95802**

Various Cpsrs Virtuoso Pf Études. *Various artists.* Ƨ (22 discs) Ɔ **95571**

Various Cpsrs Wks from the Golden Age of Rembrandt. *Musica Amphion/Belder.* Ƨ ② **95917**

BR-KLASSIK

Bruckner Sym No 9 (pp2014). *Bavarian RSO/Jansons.* ƒ **900173**

Various Cpsrs Portrait (pp1997-2017). *Bavarian RSO/Haitink.* Ƨ ⑪ Ɔ **900174**

BRUZANE *bruzane.com*

Messenger P'tites Michu. *Compagnie Les Brigands/Pays de la Loire Nat Orch/Dumoussaud.* ƒ ② **BZ1034**

CANTALOUPE *cantaloupemusic.com*

Wollschleger American Dream. *Bearthoven.* ƒ **CA21145**

CAPELLA DE MINISTRERS *capellademinstrers.es*

Various Cpsrs Music & Medieval Literature around the Holy
Grail. *Capella de Ministrers/Magraner.* ƒ **CDM1845**

CAPRICCIO *capriccio.at*

von Einem Orch Wks. *Berlin RSO/Kalitzke.* ƒ **C5357**

Piazzolla María de Buenos Aires. *Sols/Beethoven Orch, Bonn/Sprenger.* Ƨ ② **C5305**

Yun Chbr Wks. *Various artists.* ƒ **C5364**

CEDILLE *cedillerecords.org*

Various Cpsrs Ascent – Wks for Va & Pf. *Lipman/Kramer.* ƒ **CDR90000 184**

CHAMPS HILL *champsillrecords.co.uk*

Shapira Midnight Journeys. *Shapira/Shaham, H/Plane/Carroll/BBC NOW/Gamba/Arpeggione CO/Bokor.* ƒ **CHRC148**

CHANDOS *chandos.net*

Arriaga Orch Wks. *BBC PO/Mena.* ƒ **CHAN20077**

Beach. Schumann, C. Smyth Wks for Vn & Pf. *Little/Lenehan.* ƒ **CHAN20030**

Schubert Sym Nos 3, 5 & 8. *CBSO/Gardner.* ƒ Ƨ **CHSA5234**

Schumann Pf Wks. *Bavouzet.* ƒ **CHAN20081**

CHANNEL CLASSICS *channelclassics.com*

Mozart Cpte Solo Pf Concs (r1990-91). *Immerseel/Anima Eterna.* Ƨ ⑩ Ɔ **CCSSEL6818**

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES

en.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr

Cavalli Missa 1660. *Galilei Consort/Chénier.* ƒ **CVS006**

CLAUDIO *claudiorecords.com*

Dodgson Pf Sons, Vol 1. *Roberts.* ƒ Ɔ **CC4431-2**

CORO *the-sixteen.org.uk*

Handel Acis & Galatea. *Sols/Sixteen/Christophers.* ƒ **COR16169**

CRYSTAL RECORDS *crystalrecords.com*

Various Cpsrs Trumpeter Extraordinaire. *Stevens.* ƒ **CD360**

CYBELE *cybele.de*

Hindemith Wks for Vc & Pf. *Grüebler/Chitadze.* ƒ Ƨ **CYBELESACD361804**

CYPRES *cypres-records.com*

Various Cpsrs Innamorata: Trilogia italiana. *Accordone/Beasley/Morini.* ƒ ③ **CYP9620**

DACAPO *dacapo-records.dk*

Riisager Vn Conc. Études. *Rensburg/Aarhus SO/Delfs.* ƒ **8 226145**

Various Cpsrs Wks for Solo Va. *Altino.* ƒ **8 226588**

DANACORD *danacord.dk*

Brahms Stolen Moments – Pf Wks. *Sandberg.* ƒ **DACOC835**

DELOS *delosmusic.com*

Verdi Messa da Requiem. *Sols/St Petersburg PO/Temirkanov.* ƒ **DE3564**

DELPHIAN *delphianrecords.co.uk*

Lutosławski. Penderecki Cpte Wks for Vn & Pf. *Foyle-Štšura Duo.* ƒ **DCD34217**

Osborne Sensations of Travel – Chbr Wks. *Hebrides Ens.* ƒ **DCD34198**

Various Cpsrs British Light Music. *Kitchen.* ƒ **DCD34212**

DIVINE ART *divine-art.co.uk*

Artyomov Orch Wks. *Moscow PO/Kitaenko/Musica Viva/Annamamedov/USSR St SO/Minbayev.* ƒ **DDA25175**

Buckley To the Northeast – Chor Wks. *Mornington Sgrs/Flanagan.* ƒ **DDA25187**

Cooman Jubilee – Org Wks, Vol 10. *Simmons.* ƒ **DDA25185**

Various Cpsrs Wagon of Life: Songs of Nature, Life & Love in
Time & Place. *Rowlinson/Lawson.* Ƨ **DDV24168**

DIVOX *divox.com*

Legrenzi Morte del cor penitente. *Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca.* ƒ **CDX71802**

DOREMI *doremi.com*

Haydn Pf Conc No 11. Pf Sons. *Devetzi/Barshai.* ƒ **DHR8069**

DYNAMIC *dynamic.it*

Rota Notte di un nevrastenico. Due timidi (pp2017). *Sols/Reate Fest Orch/Bonolis.* ƒ ② **CDS7830**

Vivaldi Stravaganza – Concs, Op 4. *Martynov/Modo Antiquo/Sardelli.* ƒ ② **CDS7778**

FARAO *farao-classics.de*

Doppler, F & C Discoveries – Fl Wks. *Adorján/Pahud/Schulze/Arcis Hn Qt.* ƒ **B108104**

FUGA LIBERA *outhere-music.com/fugalibera*

Kurtág. Schumann Wks for Cl, Va & Pf. *Van Spaendonck/Desaint/Lortie.* ƒ **FUG611**

Tchaikovsky Sym No 4 **Wagner** Tristan Prelude & Liebestod.
South Netherlands Philh/Liss. ƒ **FUG754**

Various Cpsrs Origins – Wks for Fl & Pf. *Fret/Iltchenko.* ƒ **FUG612**

GENUIN *genuin.de*

Mozart Sym Nos 13, 16, 29 & 40. *Folkwang CO/Klumpff.* ƒ **GEN19636**

Schubert Wks for Pf Duo. *Duo Lontano.* ƒ **GEN19649**

Xenakis Pléiades. *DeciBells/Melchiorre.* ƒ **GEN19633**

Various Cpsrs Dances – Pf Wks. *Rajic.* ƒ **GEN19554**

Various Cpsrs Grand Tour. *Cicerone Ens.* ƒ **GEN19648**

Various Cpsrs ... into the night – Pf Wks. *Lim.* ƒ **GEN19637**

Various Cpsrs Joseph Haydn & his London Disciples – Pf Wks.
Maurer. ƒ **GEN19650**

Various Cpsrs Spectrum – Wks for Cl & Pf. *Schneider/Balabicheva.* ƒ **GEN19635**

Various Cpsrs Voyages sonores – Wks for Vc & Pf. *Kliegel/Triendl.* ƒ **GEN19634**

THE GIFT OF MUSIC *thegiftofmusic.com*

Various Cpsrs All Clear: Favourite Songs from World War II.
Various artists. Ƨ Ɔ **CCLCDG1293**

Various Cpsrs Gloria: Timeless Chor Wks. *Magdala/Skinner.* Ƨ **CCLCDG1294**

GOD RECORDS	godrec.com
Stankovski Linien II. <i>Stankovski</i> .	🇫🇷 🟡 GOD51
GRAND PIANO	
Tansman Pf Wks. <i>Koukl</i> .	🇫🇷 GP788
Tsintsadze 24 Preludes for Pf. <i>Fiolia</i> .	🇫🇷 GP783
HÄNSSLER CLASSIC	haenssler-classic.de
Bach , JS Fl Wks. <i>Graf/Bach Collegium Stuttgart/Rilling</i> .	🇫🇷 ② HC18072
Brahms Vc Sons. <i>Hagen, J/Treutler</i> .	🇫🇷 HC17060
Mendelssohn Stg Qt No 6 Purcell Fantazias. <i>Alinde Qt</i> .	🇫🇷 HC18031
Mozart Pf Sons. <i>Muller</i> .	🇫🇷 HC18068
HARMONIA MUNDI	harmoniamundi.com
Haydn Pf Sons. <i>Bezuidenhout</i> .	🇫🇷 HMM90 2273
HYPERION	hyperion-records.co.uk
Kabalevsky , Shostakovich Vc Sons. <i>Isserlis/Mustonen</i> .	🇫🇷 CDA68239
Liszt Années de pèlerinage, année 3. Pf Wks. <i>Tiberghien</i> .	🇫🇷 CDA68202
Martinů Cpte Wks for Vn & Orch. <i>Matoušek/Czech PO/Hogwood</i> .	🇸🇰 ④ 🟡 CDS44611/4
Parry Pf Trios Nos 1 & 3. Partita. <i>Leonore Pf Trio</i> .	🇫🇷 CDA68243
Various Cpsrs Amarae morti: Lamentations & Motets. <i>León de Oro/Phillips</i> .	🇫🇷 CDA68279
ICSM RECORDS	icsmrecords.com
Gershwin American Dreams. <i>McLean/RPO/Lee</i> .	🇫🇷 ICSM011
Various Cpsrs Genesis - Wks for Marimba & Orch. <i>Koleva/Bulgarian Nat RSO/Georgiev</i> .	🇫🇷 ICSM010
KAIROS	kairos-music.com
Pisati Sette Studi. <i>Various artists</i> .	🇫🇷 0015052KAI
Reiter Noch sind wir ein Wort <i>Klangforum Wien</i> .	🇫🇷 0015031KAI
Schafer Vers une présence réelle <i>Ens Proton, Berne/Kuhn</i> .	🇫🇷 0015036KAI
LINN	linnrecords.com
Purcell Cares of Lovers. <i>Pierce/Egarr/Carter</i> .	🇫🇷 CKD592
Wilson Syms Nos 3 & 4. <i>RSNO/Macdonald</i> .	🇫🇷 CKD616
LYRITA	lyrita.co.uk
Parry , Sherwood Pf Duos. <i>Parnassus Pf Duo</i> .	🇫🇷 SRCD368
MELODIYA	melody.su
Bach , JS St John Passion (bp1981). <i>Sols/Leningrad CO/Serov</i> .	🇩🇪 ② MELCD100 2379
Britten Solo Vc Stes. <i>Ramm</i> .	🇫🇷 MELCD100 2568
Mozart , Schnittke Stg Trios. <i>Lubotsky Trio</i> .	🇫🇷 MELCD100 2566
METRONOME	metronome.co.uk
Couperin , F Cpte Hpd Wks. <i>Cerasi</i> .	🇸🇰 ⑩ METCD1100
MODE	moderecords.com
Sharp Dispersion. <i>Veni Academy/Sharp</i> .	🇫🇷 MOD-CD305
MSR CLASSICS	msrcd.com
Dupont Cpte Pf Wks. <i>Ties</i> .	🇫🇷 ② MS1699
Various Cpsrs I Play French Horn. <i>Watt/Cochran</i> .	🇫🇷 MS1696
Various Cpsrs Portraits in Music. <i>Iowa Ens</i> .	🇫🇷 MS1597
MUSO	muso.mu
Various Cpsrs Soir: Berceuses (mais pas que ...). <i>Warnier/Thoreau La Salle/Heures du Jour Qt</i> .	🇫🇷 MU027
NAXOS	naxos.com
Bach , JS Magnificat Helmschrott Lumen. <i>Sols/Conc de Bassus/Hauk</i> .	🇩🇪 8 579049
Brahms Stg Qnts. <i>New Zealand SO/Lambros</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573455
Casablanças Orch Wks. <i>Ens New Babylon/Ferrándiz</i> .	🇩🇪 8 579017
Jolivet Cpte Fl Wks, Vol 1. <i>Boulègue/Dumont</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573885
Lortzing Op Ovs. <i>Malmö Op Orch/Märkl</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573824
Marx Orch Wks, Vol 2. <i>Bochum SO/Sloane</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573832
Mayr Cherusci. <i>Sols/Conc de Bassus/Hauk</i> .	🇩🇪 ② 8 660399/400
Moyzes Syms Nos 9 & 10. <i>Slovak RSO/Slovák</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573654
Muffat Hpd Stes, Vol 2. <i>Akutagawa</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573275
Nepomuceno Orch Wks. <i>Minas Gerais PO/Mechetti</i> .	🇩🇪 8 574067
Respighi Roman Trilogy. <i>Buffalo PO/Falletta</i> .	🇩🇪 8 574013
Sáinz de la Maza Gtr Wks. <i>Escobar</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573456
Schumann Spanisches Liederspiel. <i>Sols/Eisenlohr</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573944
Seitz Concs for Vn & Pf. <i>Chung/Lee</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573965
Various Cpsrs Best of. <i>Biret</i> .	🇸🇰 ⑩ 🟡 8 506035
Various Cpsrs Cpte Recs, Vol 8 (r1926-27). <i>Kreisler</i> .	🇩🇪 🟡 8 111409
Various Cpsrs Gtr Wks. <i>Kocić</i> .	🇩🇪 8 573906
Various Cpsrs Wild Dance - Wks for Vn & Gtr. <i>Duo Sonidos</i> .	🇩🇪 8 574045

gramophone.co.uk


NIBIRU	nibiru-publishers.com
Vivaldi In Bohemia. <i>Eibenova/Prague Baroque Sols/Ens Inégal/Viktoria</i> .	🇫🇷 0150-2211
NIMBUS	wyastone.co.uk
Blackford Seven Hokusai Miniatures. <i>Solem Qt</i> .	🇫🇷 NI6379
Mozart Mercy of Titus (bp1956). <i>Sols incl Sutherland/London Mozart Plyrs/Pritchard</i> .	🇩🇪 ② 🟡 NI7967
Various Cpsrs 20th-Century Fl Concs. <i>Wilson/BBC Concert Orch/So</i> .	🇫🇷 NI6375
NMNC	nmrec.co.uk
Finnis Air, Turning. <i>Various artists</i> .	🇫🇷 NMCD249
Rands Chains Like the Sea. <i>Moser/BBC PO/Rundell</i> .	🇫🇷 NMCD253
NONESUCH	nonesuch.com
Various Cpsrs c1300-c2000 - Pf Wks. <i>Denk</i> .	🇫🇷 ② 7559 79347-1
OEHMS	oehmsclassics.de
Janáček Cunning Little Vixen (sung in German). <i>Sols incl Alder/Frankfurt Op & Museum Orch/Debus</i> .	🇫🇷 ② OC982
Nobunaga , Séjourné , Vivaldi Marimba Concs. <i>Nunoya/Kurpfälzisches CO/Schlaefli</i> .	🇫🇷 OC1891
Various Cpsrs Splendid Silbermann - Org Wks. <i>von Blohn</i> .	🇫🇷 OC1705
ONDINE	ondine.net
Brahms Pf Qt No 1 (orch Schoenberg) Parry Elegy for Brahms. <i>Gävle SO/Martín</i> .	🇫🇷 ODE1314-2
Zimmermann , BA Vn Conc. Orch Wks. <i>Josefowicz/Finnish RSO/Lintu</i> .	🇫🇷 🇸🇪 OCD1325-5
OUR RECORDINGS	ourrecordings.com
Borup-Jørgensen Gtr Wks. <i>Larsen</i> .	🇫🇷 🇸🇪 6 220672
PALADINO	paladino.at
Poulenc Wks for Pf, Two Pfs & Pf Duo. <i>May/Wienand</i> .	🇫🇷 PMR0098
PENTATONE	pentatonemusic.com
Mozart Syms Nos 40 & 41. <i>NDR Rad PO/Manze</i> .	🇫🇷 🇸🇪 PTC5186 757
Schubert Heimweh - Lieder. <i>Richter/Huber/Schorn</i> .	🇫🇷 🇸🇪 PTC5186 722
Various Cpsrs One Century of Music 1918-2018. <i>Various artists</i> .	🇩🇪 ⑤ 🟡 PTC5186 791
PHILHARMONIA	philharmonia-records.com
Bruckner Sym No 4. <i>Zurich PO/Luisi</i> .	🇫🇷 PHR0110
PIANO CLASSICS	piano-classics.com
Font y de Anta Andalucía. <i>Schwartz</i> .	🇫🇷 PCL10144
Messiaen Catalogue d'oiseaux. <i>Longobardi</i> .	🇩🇪 ③ PCL10155
Shamo Cpte Pf Wks. <i>Tchesnokov</i> .	🇩🇪 ③ PCL10152
PROFIL	haensslerprofil.de
Schmittbaur Hommage. <i>Hof-Capelle Carlsruhe</i> .	🇫🇷 PH18064
Various Cpsrs American Wins in Russia. <i>Cliburn</i> .	🇸🇰 ⑩ 🟡 PH18080
Various Cpsrs Edn, Vol 4. <i>Mravinsky</i> .	🇸🇰 ⑩ 🟡 PH18045
Various Cpsrs Histoire de la romance russe, Vol 1. <i>Diouf/Timofeyev/Dashkova Ens</i> .	🇫🇷 PH19009
RAMÉE	outhere-music.com/ramee
Bach , JS Org Concs. <i>Muffatti/Jacobs</i> .	🇫🇷 RAM1804
Various Cpsrs Obsesso. <i>Ratas del Viejo Mundo/De Rycker</i> .	🇫🇷 RAM1808
REGENT	regent-records.co.uk
Various Cpsrs Year at Exeter. <i>Ch of Exeter Cath/Parsons/Noon</i> .	🇫🇷 REGCD524
RESONUS	resonusclassics.com
Bach , JS Chorale Partitas. <i>Farr</i> .	🇫🇷 RES10234
Purcell Sweeter than Roses - Songs. <i>Dennis/Sounds Baroque/Perkins</i> .	🇫🇷 RES10235
Various Cpsrs Salon Op - Wks for Fl & Gtr. <i>Flauguissimo Duo</i> .	🇫🇷 RES10233
RICERCAR	outhere-music.com/ricercar
Chédeville Saisons amusants. <i>Ens Danguy/Miller, T</i> .	🇫🇷 RIC398
Erlebach Cpt Trio Sons. <i>L'Achéron/Joubert-Caillet</i> .	🇫🇷 RIC393
SCRIBENDUM	scribendumrecordings.com
Various Cpsrs Concert Hall Recs. <i>Schuricht</i> .	🇸🇰 ⑩ 🟡 SC011
SIGNUM	signumrecords.com
Various Cpsrs Love Songs. <i>King's Sgrs</i> .	🇫🇷 SIGCD565
SOLO MUSICA	
Bach , JS Solo Vn Sons & Partitas. <i>Pochekin</i> .	🇩🇪 ② SM298
Brahms Vn Sons. <i>Darvarova/Chen</i> .	🇫🇷 SM295

SOMM	somm-recordings.com
Bax , Cohen Private Passions - Pf Wks. <i>Bebbington</i> .	🇫🇷 SOMMCD0193
Coates Songs. <i>Rudge/Glynn</i> .	🇫🇷 SOMMCD0192
SONO LUMINUS	sonoluminus.com
Various Cpsrs Citizen - Pf Wks. <i>Levingston</i> .	🇫🇷 DSL92228
STERLING	sterlingcd.com
Various Cpsrs Art of Singing, Vol 3. <i>Björling, L</i> .	🇩🇪 ② CDA1832
STONE RECORDS	stonerecords.co.uk
Various Cpsrs Sonatinas for Vn & Pf. <i>Humphreys/Eimer</i> .	🇫🇷 5060192 780826
SUITE 28	suite28records.com
Various Cpsrs Heaven & Hell: The Doors of Perception - Pf Wks. <i>Stubbs</i> .	🇫🇷 STE018
SUPRAPHON	supraphon.com
Martinů Songs. <i>Janková/Král/Kahánek</i> .	🇫🇷 SU4235-2
Various Cpsrs Douce Dame Jolie. <i>Flautisti Rec Qt, London</i> .	🇫🇷 SU4254-2
SWR CLASSIC	swrmusic.com
Various Cpsrs Pf Wks (pp1962). <i>Kempff</i> .	🇫🇷 SWR19412
TACTUS	tactus.it
Marini Concs, Op 7. <i>Costanzo Porta Ens/Cremona Antiqua/Greco</i> .	🇫🇷 ② TC591390
Rossaro Voc & Inst Chbr Wks. <i>Sols/Ballario</i> .	🇫🇷 ② TC821890
Various Cpsrs Historia del Beata San Martino. <i>Cappella Musicale di San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna/Cascio</i> .	🇫🇷 TC520003
TOCCATA CLASSICS	toccataclassics.com
Blitzstein Solo Pf Wks. <i>Lehrman</i> .	🇫🇷 TOCC0438
Moriarty Missa Adsum! Celebrating Women. <i>Sols/Ukrainian Fest Orch/Kuchar</i> .	🇫🇷 TOCC0503
Stevenson Pf Wks, Vol 3. <i>Guild</i> .	🇫🇷 TOCC0403
Tod Org Wks. <i>Lehtola</i> .	🇫🇷 TOCC0505
WARNER CLASSICS	warnerclassics.com
Berlioz Cpte Wks. <i>Various artists</i> .	🇸🇰 (27 discs) 9029 56144-4
Various Cpsrs Songplay. <i>DiDonato</i> .	🇫🇷 9029 55343-8
WERGO	vergo.de
Nunes Minnesang. Musivus. <i>SWR Voc Ens/Creed/SWR SO/Pomàrico</i> .	🇫🇷 WER7378-2
Schneider Clair-Obscur. <i>Clair-Obscur Sax Qt</i> .	🇫🇷 WER5119-2
WILLOWHAYNE	willowhaynerecords.com
Various Cpsrs Musick to Heare - Songs. <i>Hunt/Hosking/Hartt-Palmer</i> .	🇫🇷 WHRO55
DVD & BLU-RAY	
ACCENTUS	
Shostakovich Sym No 5 Tchaikovsky Vn Conc (pp2017). <i>Vengerov/Shanghai SO/Yu</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD ACC20440 ; 🇸🇪 ACC10440
ALPHA	outhere-music.com/alpha
Cavalli Giasone. <i>Sols/Capella Mediterranea/Alarcón</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD ALPHA718
BELVEDERE	belvedere-edition.com
Various Cpsrs Centennial Celebration (pp2018). <i>Lang/Cleveland Orch/Welser-Möst</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD BVE08054 ; 🇸🇪 BVE08055
CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES	en.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr
Various Cpsrs Coronation of King George II. <i>King's Consort/King</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD CVS005
C MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT	
Puccini Tosca (pp2018). <i>Sols incl Harteros/Dresden Staatskapelle/Thielemann</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD 748308 ; 🇸🇪 748404
Verdi Due Foscari (pp2016). <i>Sols incl Domingo/Scala, Milan/Mariotti</i> .	🇫🇷 742107
DYNAMIC	dynamic.it
Rota Notte di un nevrastenico. Due timidi (pp2017). <i>Sols/Reate Fest Orch/Bonolis</i> .	🇫🇷 DVD 37830 ; 🇸🇪 57830
OPUS ARTE	
Various Cpsrs Fairytale Ops. <i>Royal Op</i> .	🇩🇪 ⑤ DVD 🟡 OA1270BD ; 🇩🇪 ③ OABD7246BD

REVIEWS INDEX

A Adès Arcadiana, Op 12 – No 6, O Albion 79 Antheil Archipelago 36 Hot-Time Dance 36 Spectre of the Rose Waltz 36 Symphonies – No 3, ‘American’; No 6, ‘After Delacroix’ 36 T Armstrong Akina 52 Dance Maze: Variations for Piano; Duos for Trumpet and Piano 52 Diversions 3 52 Divertissements 52 Morning Music 52 B JS Bach Concertos – after A Marcello, BWV974; after B Marcello, BWV981; after Vivaldi, BWV972 37 Concertos for Two, Three and Four Keyboards – BWV1060; BWV1061; BWV1062; BWV1063; BWV1065 36 Keyboard Concertos 103 Six Solo Cello Suites, ‘recomposed by Peter Gregson’ 52 Solo Cello Suites: No 2, BWV1008 – Sarabande; No 3, BWV1009 – Bourrée; No 5, BWV1011 – Sarabande 40 Solo Violin Sonatas and Partitas, BWV1001-1006 62 DN Baker Blues (Deliver My Soul) 58 Barber Agnus Dei 79 Bartók Violin Sonata No 1, Op 21 Sz75 52 Hungarian Folk Tunes (arr Szigeti from For Children, Sz42) 52 Bazzini Dies irae 79 Beethoven Symphony No 3, ‘Eroica’, Op 55 37 Behr Polka de WR (transcr Rachmaninov) 68 Berg Wozzeck 84 Berlioz Harold en Italie, Op 16 39 Les nuits d’été, Op 7 39 Roméo et Juliette, Op 17 72 Symphonie fantastique, Op 14 (arr Heisser) 62 Bernstein Mass – A Simple Song 81 Bizet L’arlésienne – Menuet (arr Rachmaninov) 68 Carmen 84 Borodin Prince Igor 96 Boucheron Confutatis 79	Brahms Fünf Lieder, Op 94 80 Die schöne Magelone, Op 33 72 Symphonies 103 Symphony No 4, Op 98 39 Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op 56 <i>a</i> 37 CS Brown A Song Without Words 58 Brennan Theme from Harry’s Game 79 Bruckner Mass No 3 73 Symphonies 103 Buzzolla Kyrie 79 Requiem 79 C Cagnoni Quid sum miser 79 Cardoso Lamentatio Feria quinta in Coena Domini – Lectio II 78 Chaminade Arabesque, Op 61 63 Six Études de concert, Op 35 63 La lisonjera, Op 50 63 Pierrette, Op 41 63 Poème provençal, Op 127 63 Six Romances sans paroles, Op 76 63 Les Sylvains, Op 60 63 B Childs Incident on Larpenteur Avenue 58 Chopin Berceuse, Op 57 63 Three Mazurkas, Op 56 63 Two Nocturnes, Op 55 63 Piano Sonata No 3, Op 58 63 Coccia Amen 79 Lacrimosa 79 Copland Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson – No 10, I’ve heard an organ talk sometimes 81 D Da Costa A Set of Dance Tunes 58 Debussy Études 65 Préludes 65 Djawadi Game of Thrones – The Rains of Castamere 79 Durufié Requiem, Op 9 – Pie Jesu 81 Dusapin À quia 40 Aufgang 40 Wenn du dem Wind ... 40 Dutilleux Tout un monde lointain 40 Dvořák Symphony No 9, ‘From the New World’, Op 95 B178 39	E Ellington In a Sentimental Mood 58 Enya/Ryan The Lord of the Rings – May it be 79 F Forrest The sun never says 79 Frances-Hoad Blurry Bagatelle 73 Invoke now the Angels 73 Lament 73 Love Bytes 73 Magic Lantern Tales 73 Scenes from Autistic Bedtimes 73 A Song Incomplete 73 Star Falling 73 The Thought Machine 73 Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort, S203i 66 Wiegenlied, S198 66 G Gaspari Offertorio 79 Gaveaux Léonore 85 Gershwin Love walked in (arr Grainger) 68 Glass Distant Figure 66 The Hours 66 Glinka A Life for the Tsar 96 Gombert Media vita 78 Grainger Colonial Song 68 In Dahomey (Cakewalk Smasher) 68 Irish Tune from County Derry 68 Ramble on the Love Duet from Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier 68 Guðnadóttir Point of Departure 58 H Handel Chandos Anthem No 8, ‘O come, let us sing unto the Lord’, HWV253 74 ‘Chandos’ Te Deum, HWV281 <i>a</i> 74 Messiah, HWV56 (arr Aareskjold) 74 Serse 87 Haydn Cello Concerto No 1, HobVIIIb:1 40 Piano Concerto, HobXVIII:11 40 Piano Sonatas, HobXVI – No 16; No 21; No 32, No 39; No 44; No 45 66 Il ritorno di Tobia, HobXXI:1 75 Symphonies – No 9; No 37; No 38; No 63, ‘La Roxelane’ 41	Hellmesberger Elfenreigen 49 Entr’acte-Valse 49 Hession She walks in beauty 79 Horowitz Danse excentrique (Moment exotique) 68 Valse 68 I Ives 114 Songs – No 42, Serenity 81 J Jacquet de La Guerre Preludes – A minor; D minor; G minor 53 Tocade in F 53 Four Trio Sonatas 53 Two Violin Sonatas 53 K Kabalevsky Cello Sonata, Op 71 57 Rondo in Memory of Prokofiev, Op 79 57 Kálmán Kaiserin Josephine 88 Karłowicz Impromptu 59 Kilpinen Liederfolge, Op 97 – No 4, Ich frage dich; No 5, Allein 80 Herbst, Op 98 – No 7, Die Kindheit; No 8, Vergänglichkeit 80 Schlittenfahrt, Op 99 No 4 80 L Lassus Lamentatio tertia, prima diei 78 Media vita 78 Regina caeli 78 Liszt Années de pèlerinage – année 3, S163 66 Ave Maria III, S60 81 Bagatelle sans tonalité, S216 <i>a</i> 66 En rêve, S207 66 La lugubre gondola II, S200/2 66 Mephisto Waltz No 4, S216 <i>b</i> 66 Sardanapalo 88 Mazeppa, S100 88 Lutosławski Cello Concerto 40 Jeux vénitiens 41 Symphonies – No 1; No 4 41 M Mabellini Lux aeterna 79 MacLean Caledonia 79 Mahler Symphony No 2, ‘Resurrection’ – Urlicht 81 Symphony No 3 – Es sungen drei Engel 81 Symphony No 6 42	F Martin Requiem – Agnus Dei 81 Martinú Violin Concertos – No 1, H226; No 2, H293 42 Medtner Forgotten Melodies, Op 13 – No 3, Danza festiva; No 6, Canzona serenata 68 Mendelssohn Capriccio brillante, Op 22 42 The Hebrides, Op 26 42 Piano Concertos – No 1, Op 25; No 2, Op 40 42 Rondo brillante, Op 29 42 Serenade and Allegro giojoso, Op 43 42 Messiaen Trois Mélodies 81 Morales Regina caeli 78 Moszkowski Guitarre, Op 45 No 2 (arr Sarasate) 59 Mozart Così fan tutte 89 Violin Concertos – No 1, K207; No 2, K211; No 3, K216 45 Mussorgsky Boris Godunov 96 Khovanshchina 96 N Nikolayeva Concert Études, Op 13 – No 15; No 18 68 Nini Ingemisco 79 P Palestrina Laudate pueri 78 Panufnik Hommage à Chopin 55 String Quartets – No 1; No 2, ‘Messages’; No 3, ‘Wycinanki’ 55 Parry Piano Trios – No 1; No 3 57 Partita 57 Pärt An den Wassern zu Babel sassen wir und weinten 37 Es sang vor langen Jahren 81 Fratres 37 My heart’s in the Highlands 81 Pari intervallo 37 Vater unser 37 Paz Milonga de los monsters 2 57 Pedrotti Tuba mirum 79 Perkinson Blue/s Forms 58 Louisiana Blues 58 Phinot Incipit oratio Jeremiae prophetae 78
--	--	---	---	---

Piazzolla Las cuatro estaciones porteñas 57 El gordo triste 57 Oblivion 57 Los pajaros perdidos 57 El titere 57 Yo soy Maria 57 Platania Sanctus 79 Poulenc Priez pour paix 81 Prokofiev Adagio, 'Cinderella and the Prince', Op 97bis 57 Ballade, Op 15 57 Visions fugitives, Op 22 68 Purcell King Arthur 91 R Rachmaninov Humoresque, Op 10 No 5 68 Six Moments musicaux, Op 16 68 Morceaux de fantaisie, Op 3 – No 3, Mélodie; No 5, Sérénade 68 Piano Sonata No 2, Op 36 68 Radiohead Pyramid Song 79 Ravel Gaspard de la nuit 65 Ricci Recordare Jesu pie 79 Rimsky-Korsakov The Snow Maiden 96 Rodgers The Sound of Music – Climb ev'ry mountain 81 Rore Chansons à 4 et 5 parties – No 24, Vieni, dolce Imeneo 77 Madrigals: Book 2 – No 1, Un'altra volta la Germania strida; No 5, O sonno; No 9, Mia benigna fortuna; Book 4 – No 2, O morte, eterno fin; No 3, Alcun non può saper; No 6, Volgi'l tuo corso; No 7, Come la notte; No 12, Di virtù di costumi; No 24, Sebben il duol; No 26, L'alto signor; Book 5 – No 1, Mentre lumi maggior; No 2, Da le belle contrade; No 10, Non è lasso martire; No 13, Convien ch'ovunque; Le vive fiamme – No 6, Alma Susanna; No 11, Tra più beati e più sublimi cori; No 15, Poi che mi invita amore; No 16, Candido e vago fiore 77 Le Vergine 77	Rossi Agnus Dei 79 Roumain Filter 58 Runestad Let my love be heard 79 S D Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K141 40 Schreker Ekkehard, Op 12 45 Phantastische Ouvertüre, Op 15 45 Vier kleine Stücke 45 Vom ewigen Leben 45 Vorspiel zu einer grossen Oper (Memnon) 45 Schubert Piano Sonatas – No 19, D958; No 20, D959; No 21, D960 67 Klavierstücke, D946 67 Symphonies – No 1, D82; No 2, D125; No 4, 'Tragic', D417; No 6, D589; No 8, 'Unfinished', D759; No 9, 'Great', D944 48 Schumann Adagio and Allegro, Op 70 45 Cello Concerto, Op 129 45 Fantasiestücke – Op 73; Op 88 45 Drei Fantasiestücke, Op 111 68 Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op 26 68 Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner, Op 35 34, 80 Drei Gesänge, Op 83 34 Sechs Gesänge, Op 107 34 Vier Gesänge, Op 142 34 Gesänge der Frühe, Op 133 68 Piano Sonata No 3, Op 14 68 Drei Romanzen, Op 94 52 Romanzen und Balladen, Op 49 34 Fünf Stücke im Volkston, Op 102 45 Violin Sonata No 1, Op 105 52 Warnung, Op 119 No 32 34 Scriabin Two Poèmes, Op 32 68 Shostakovich Cello Sonata, Op 40 57 Moderato 57 Sigfúsdóttir Loom 58 Spirals 58	Sousa The Stars and Stripes Forever (arr Horowitz) 68 Stefánsdóttir He(a)r 58 Stenhammar Serenade, Op 31 46 Symphony No 2, Op 34 46 WG Still Suite 58 E Strauss Mit Extrapost, Op 259 49 Opern-Soirée, Op 162 49 Josef Strauss Sphärenklänge, Op 235 49 Die Tänzerin, Op 227 49 Transactionen, Op 186 49 J Strauss I Radetzky Marsch, Op 228 49 J Strauss II An der schönen blauen Donau, Op 314 49 Die Bajadere, Op 351 49 Egyptischer Marsch, Op 335 49 Express, Op 311 49 Im Sturmschritt, Op 348 49 Künsterleben, Op 316 49 Lob der Frauen, Op 315 49 Nordseebilder, Op 390 49 Ritter Pásmán – Csárdás; Eva-Walzer 49 Der Zigeunerbaron – Overture 49 R Strauss Morgen!, Op 27 No 4 81 Traum durch die Dämmerung, Op 29 No 1 81 Sullivan The Light of the World 77 Szymanowski Chant de Roxane 59 Mythes, Op 30 59 Nocturne and Tarantella, Op 28 59 Romance, Op 23 59 T Tally Warm life at the foot of the iceberg 58 Tavener Song for Athene 79 Tchaikovsky Eugene Onegin 96 Lullaby, Op 16 No 1 (arr Rachmaninov) 68 The Queen of Spades 96	Thorvaldsdóttir Impressions 58 Reflections 58 Traditional Carrickfergus 79 Danny Boy 79 My luvie is like a red, red rose 79 The Parting Glass 79 Soay 79 V Verdi Libera me, Domine 79 I Lombardi alla prima crociata 92 Victoria Magnificat primi toni 78 Regina caeli 78 Vivaldi Andromeda liberata – Sovente il sole 93 Argippo – Se lento ancora il fulmine 93 Catone in Utica – Se mai senti spirarti sul volto 93 Il Giustino – Vedrò con mio diletto 93 Orlando furioso – Ah fuggi rapido; Sol da te, mio dolce amore 93 Ottone in villa – Leggi almeno tiranna infedele 93 La Silvia – Quell' augellin che canta 93 Tito Manlio – Combatta un gentil cor 93 La verità in cimento – Solo quella guancia 93 W Wallen Woogie Boogie 58 CC White Levee Dance 58 D White Blues Dialogues 58 Wieniawski Légende, Op 17 59 Polonaise de concert, Op 4 59 Wintory Journey – I was born for this 79 Wolf Italienisches Liederbuch 78	Haydn Wood Cities of Romance 46 Egypta: An Egyptian Suite 46 Three Famous Cinema Stars 46 Festival March 46 Manx Countryside Sketches 46 Royal Castles 46 Snapshots of London 46 Z BA Zimmermann Violin Concerto 46 Photoptosis 46 Die Soldaten – Vocal Symphony 46 Ziehrer Schönfeld-Marsch, Op 422 49 Collections 'Amarae morti' – El León de Oro 78 'Blues Dialogues – Music by Black Composers' – Rachel Barton Pine 58 Cello Concertos & Sonatas – André Navarra 103 'The Classic André Previn' 99 'Complete Philips, Mercury and Deutsche Grammophon Recordings' – Henryk Szeryng 101 'The Complete Recordings' – Feodor Chaliapin 102 'Enchanted Isle' – Voces8 79 'Four Worlds' – Moye Chen 68 'He(a)r' – Nordic Affect 58 'The Making of a Musician' – Michel Dalberto 101 'Messa per Rossini' – Riccardo Chailly 79 'Michelangelo's Madrigal' – Kate Macoboy & Robert Meunier 80 'The Munich Years' – Sergiu Celibidache 101 'Nature's Solace' – Stephan Loges 80 'New Year's Concert 2019' – Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra 49 'The Polish Violin' – Jennifer Pike 59 'Reflections' – Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev 68 'A Simple Song' – Anne Sofie von Otter 81 'Tragédiennes, Vols 1-3' – Véronique Gens 101
---	--	---	---	--



PTC 5186 707

FRANZ SCHUBERT
SYMPHONIES 1 & 6

B'ROCK ORCHESTRA RENÉ JACOBS

SCHUBERT - SYMPHONIES 1 & 6

RENÉ JACOBS

B'ROCK ORCHESTRA

On his first album released on PENTATONE, multiple prize-winning conductor René Jacobs finally records Schubert, his first great musical love. Jacobs delivers his fresh perspective on the favourite composer of his youth together with the exceptional players of the B'Rock Orchestra, acclaimed for their inspired playing, musical curiosity and original approach to the classics.

PENTATONE
www.pentatonemusic.com

Distributed in the UK by RSK

John Simpson

The BBC's World Affairs Editor on the powerful place of music at difficult times

Music has been a solace for me, countless times. There's a sort of rationality about music, even the wilder stuff, that gives you a calming sense, when you've seen things you wish you hadn't seen. I remember after the massacre in Tiananmen Square in 1989 – I'd spent the whole preceding three weeks in the square with the students, and then watching them and other people just being mown down was a really, really difficult experience. To restore some sort of balance in your mental life after something like that, I found I was listening to, particularly, Brahms. I found that the symphonies were really good at bringing me back. It's not all just beauty and charm, there is real force and drive behind them. The music that he wrote seemed to take in the wilder, more violent side of things and to show some kind of way to calmness and a conclusion. It's probably silly, imaginative stuff on my part, but that's certainly what I felt at the time. It was real, real therapy. And it worked.

I did play the flute – not well, but it's still pleasant even if you make awful squeaks and grunts, it still gives you a sense of achievement to get through a piece of music (though people on the other side of a thin hotel wall don't necessarily see it that way!). I took my flute with me everywhere, but it got more difficult as security searches increased – you found yourself having to explain it, and put it together, and it just irritated me after a while. I did have a teacher for a bit, but that's quite difficult when you're travelling around and they get bored of being put off for the fifth time in a row. It was essentially just a little hobby, and I might as well have used a mouth organ – in fact I wish could play that as it is quite small and you can get away with that!

At school I remember singing in the choir: Brahms's *A German Requiem* is in my head quite a bit all these years later. And all the old C of E hymns. And when things are difficult, and you're stuck somewhere, trapped perhaps, you find yourself falling back on these things. It's quite likely that the cameraman will say, 'Stop whistling that bloody tune!', and you say, 'Terribly sorry' – but it's how you keep yourself together. I don't want to give the impression that I go around like a vicar singing lots of hymns in difficult times, but the tunes are there with me a lot. It's another part of trying to keep a grasp on what you would like to regard as reality at a time when things around you seem to be going a bit crazy. I remember a time in Afghanistan when we came under absolutely constant shelling for a long time. There are lots of nasty experiences you can have, but that sense of being shelled is really difficult. There's a line in *Homage to Catalonia* where George Orwell talks about that, and says the shells seem to be speaking to you – 'I'm coming for you' – and you hear that in the sound of the shells or the mortars. It's scary, and you've got to have some way of just keeping a grip. I don't know how other people do it, but my way is to think of music, and it works really, really well.




THE RECORD I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Dvořák *Rusalka*

Renée Fleming *sop* Czech PO / Charles Mackerras
Decca

I absolutely love Renée Fleming's voice, and would find it hard to live without her 'Song to the moon'.

I feel I kind of invented the Walkman, before it was actually invented! I was working at BBC radio, and they issued us all with the latest fantastic technology, which was a cassette machine; that was the thing you wanted, and you complained if your colleague was issued with one and you weren't. So I used to record Radio 3 on to it, and go around with my rather unfeasibly large recorder listening to music with my headphones on, when nobody did that kind of thing. And then Sony invented it and I thought, 'That's old hat, I've been doing it for ages!'

I'm one of the last people to have an iPod, now they've phased them out – but I notice they're still selling for vast amounts on eBay – and mine covers everything. I'm very keen on Bartók and Shostakovich. My good friend Nicholas Snowman is always trying to get me interested in really up-to-date, modern music, but it's not quite my thing. We shared a room in my second year at Cambridge, and his huge thing then was opera (he later became the head of Glyndebourne), and he educated me in music as much as anybody educated me in anything else. I owe him a huge debt. 

John Simpson co-presents the second episode of 'Our Classical Century', on BBC Four and the BBC iPlayer, in February



OPERA VISION

FEBRUARY & MARCH

FEBRUARY

<i>Billy Budd</i>	Britten	Den Norske Opera	8.02.2019
<i>La Gioconda</i>	Ponchielli	La Monnaie De Munt	12.02.2019
<i>Brothers</i>	Bjarnason	Icelandic Opera	22.02.2019
<i>Juditha Triumphants</i>	Vivaldi	Dutch National Opera	28.02.2019

MARCH

<i>Ice</i>	Kuusisto	Finnish National Opera	5.03.2019
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mark Grey	La Monnaie De Munt	15.03.2019
<i>Werther</i>	Massenet	Bergen National Opera	22.03.2019
<i>Falstaff</i>	Verdi	Garsington Opera	28.03.2019

Falstaff | Garsington Opera

www.operavision.eu

Xerxes | Deutsche Oper am Rhein

Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union

